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Mr Dermot Mooney  
Headteacher  
Margaret Roper Catholic Primary School  
Russell Hill Road  
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Dear Mr Mooney

### **Short inspection of Margaret Roper Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 16 January 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in March 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

In the last year, there have been significant staff changes. You and your governors have seen this as an opportunity, rather than a challenge, and have made strategic staffing appointments. You have broadened the leadership structure and have appointed two assistant headteachers. In addition, you have appointed experienced literacy and inclusion leaders to assist you in driving forward the school's appropriately identified priorities.

Achievement in reading is a clear strength of the school. Pupils make significant progress, resulting in a greater proportion leaving the school above the national standards. The progress of most-able pupils was a development point from your last inspection. You have addressed this point successfully, resulting in this group making above-average progress in reading, writing and mathematics last year. You have identified that you need to raise achievement for all pupils in writing, to match those of reading and mathematics. You are rightly proud of the learning behaviours of pupils and their engagement in learning.

Staff, pupils and parents are positive about the school, in particular, the approachability of staff and their focus on pupils' well-being. The majority of parents report that their children are happy at Margaret Roper Primary School. You appreciate that the changes in staffing have understandably caused concern for some parents. You have listened to their feedback and have increased the number of meetings to support parents and carers in helping their children at home, for example in phonics and mathematics. You are now looking at ways to increase the level of communication with parents about their children's

progress.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Your role as headteacher representative on the local authority safeguarding board provides you with a good understanding of national and local safeguarding priorities. You ensure that all staff members receive regular safeguarding training, and you meet personally with new staff to discuss school procedures. As a result, staff are clear about what to do if they have concerns about a pupil, as reflected in their use of school referral forms. The new online recording system shows that you work appropriately with external agencies to support pupils and their families. You are well supported by governors, who monitor the single central record to ensure that all staff have been appropriately vetted. Your joint annual review of safeguarding, alongside your own regular updates, ensures that safeguarding practice remains robust.

The curriculum provides a range of opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. 'Safety Week' includes visits from the emergency services and teaches pupils about aspects of safety, such as keeping safe online and bullying. The vast majority of pupils can identify an adult in school whom they can approach about any concerns. You listen to pupils' feedback and have introduced 'worry boxes' to enable pupils to share their concerns. Pupils welcome this and report that if they post any concerns in the boxes, they are always addressed. School records show that the incidences of poor behaviour are low overall. You have identified, through your records and from pupil feedback, that most incidents happen at lunchtime. As a result, you have introduced a range of initiatives to address this. This has resulted in fewer incidents being recorded than at the same time last year.

### **Inspection findings**

- We agreed to look at writing in key stage 2 because this is a school priority. Not enough pupils made the progress required to meet the national standards in 2017. In addition, we agreed to look at the progress of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and middle-ability pupils, as these two groups typically make the least progress.
- Your evaluation of writing has accurately identified the need to focus more closely on pupils' spelling accuracy and their engagement in writing. Leaders have introduced a range of initiatives to develop these aspects. For example, the teaching of writing is now more closely linked to high-quality children's texts. This inspires pupils to engage more with the content of their writing and to develop their own voice as writers. Pupils in Year 6, for example, were eager to share their writing of an atmospheric story opening for Macbeth. They were successfully using their knowledge of the play to influence their choice of vocabulary and writing structure.
- Pupils know that teachers are helping them to improve their writing and know what they must do to improve their writing. They explained that 'teachers are pushing us more and helping us'. They say that the new focus on spelling helps them to be more accurate. Pupils are keen to be nominated as 'superstar writers' of the week, and particularly enjoy the writing focus arising from class texts.

- Writing in pupils' books shows consistency between subjects and improvement in pupils' writing over time. Pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to write in a variety of styles. Teachers address spelling errors more consistently and this makes a difference to most pupils' spelling. You and your leaders acknowledge that there is still more to do to develop pupils' spelling accuracy and to balance the focus between the accuracy of their technical skills and the development of their ideas.
- Leaders work closely with leaders in other schools to provide consistency in writing assessment. The expertise of your assistant headteacher as a writing moderator is helpful and ensures that writing assessments are accurate. Through your assessment, you are quick to identify pupils who are not making sufficient progress. You take swift action to ensure that these pupils do not fall behind. The support provided for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has led to these pupils making stronger progress. As a result, more of them are working at the expected standard. Additionally, you are challenging the most-able pupils so that more are targeted to achieve a higher standard this year. Current school information shows that pupils, including middle prior attainers and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, achieve well. The proportion of pupils in Year 6 already working at the expected standard is close to the 2017 outcomes. This indicates that leaders' initiatives make a positive difference to pupils' progress and outcomes.
- We also agreed to look at the progress that pupils make from the end of the early years to the end of key stage 1. Last year fewer lower-attaining pupils met the expected standard in writing and mathematics, compared to similar pupils nationally.
- You explained that a significant number of pupils in Year 2 last year have SEN and/or disabilities. This had an impact on the overall outcomes for lower attainers. Although these pupils made strong progress, they did not meet the expected standards at the end of key stage 1. You and your leaders continue to support this group of pupils with a range of strategies. This support has already led to a higher proportion working at age-related standards in Year 3. You are closely monitoring pupils in key stage 1 to ensure that they remain on track to meet their targets.
- On our visits to key stage 1 classrooms, we talked to pupils and looked at their work. Learning environments and resources are used effectively to support pupils' key skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Questioning is regularly used to check pupils' understanding and to move them on in their learning. Pupils use specific mathematical vocabulary to explain their learning and work independently to tackle calculations. For example, the most-able pupils are able to check their answers to mental calculations by using inverse calculations. Work in pupils' books shows that learning activities are appropriately linked to pupils' starting points, enabling the vast majority of pupils to make good gains in their mathematics and writing. You recognise, at times, that learning activities do not offer sufficient challenge or support for individual pupils. This is particularly the case as they move from early years into Year 1. You are focusing on this transition to ensure that pupils build on their prior learning more quickly when they enter key stage 1.
- Finally, we agreed to look at attendance and the persistent absence of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. Their attendance has been below the national average for all pupils, which is detrimental to their learning. The level of attendance for this group remains below the national average for all pupils. This is because a small number of pupils are

frequently absent due to specific medical needs. You continue to monitor this group closely to ensure that these pupils are in school as much as possible.

- You have worked hard to increase attendance generally, which rose last year to place the school in the top 10% of schools. Your successful initiatives to celebrate attendance resulted in 60 pupils being at school every day, last term. You work closely with external agencies to support pupils who are not attending school regularly. This has led to a decrease in persistent absence, which is below the national figure.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they build on the current writing strategies in key stage 2 so that all pupils, particularly the middle attainers, make as much progress as possible to meet and/or exceed the standards expected for their age.
- they continue to maintain and build upon the progress pupils make from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics as they move through key stage 1.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Southwark and the director of children's services for Croydon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Helen Ridding  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I discussed the school's work with you and your assistant headteachers at the start of the inspection and throughout the day. I went on learning walks with you and your assistant headteachers, and we jointly looked at pupils' work. During our visits to lessons, I spoke to pupils about their learning. I also met with a group of pupils and listened to pupils read. I met with leaders to discuss assessment, work and outcomes at key stage 1, provision for writing, support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, attendance and safeguarding. I considered the responses from staff and pupils, and from parents and carers who responded to Parent View, the Ofsted online survey. I spoke with a representative from the local authority and met with five governors. I scrutinised a range of documentation and information published on the school's website.