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27 February 2018

Mrs Katy Cox
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Cox

Short inspection of St Matthew's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 30 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 June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Over the last few years you have focused on developing further the leadership of the school and, along with the governing body, invested heavily in the development of staff. The school now benefits from the knowledge and expertise of you as a local leader of education and three staff who are also specialist leaders of education.

A number of staff are working towards gaining the national professional qualification for senior leaders and the national professional qualification for middle leaders. The senior leadership group and leaders at all levels know well the strengths and areas for development of the school. Consequently, the leadership and management of the school has improved and has great capacity for even further improvement.

You are relentless in your ambition for continuous school improvement and you always put the children and pupils in your school at the heart of what you and your staff do. You and your leadership team have successfully dealt with the areas for improvement identified in that last inspection report.

At the last inspection, you were asked to increase the proportion of good or better teaching and improve the reading and writing for all pupils including the disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities at the end of key stage 2. You acted swiftly and focused strongly on further staff development and sharing good and outstanding practice, not only

within your school, but also through effective collaborations with other schools and through the local partnership of Catholic schools. Consequently, all teachers provide challenging work to all pupils of all abilities. Improvements in pupil progress in 2017 for reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 are clear evidence of the effect of your actions.

Your passion and commitment has created a very strong culture of collaboration and a team ethos among your staff and governors. They value and support your determination for improvements in teaching and learning. You and your senior leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching and have put in place effective monitoring systems and procedures to support further improvement. As a result, all teaching across the school is now strong. Pupils' skills in reading and writing has improved.

Another area for improvement identified in the last inspection report was the improvement of attendance to at least the national average. Since then, you, your staff and your parent involvement officer have worked hard to raise the profile of attendance in the school. You introduced various initiatives, including rewards and improved the school's engagement with parents and carers. As a result, pupils' attendance is now broadly in line with the national average. However, there is a need for you and your team to improve further the attendance of the disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. You have made sure that the school site is secure and the monitoring of pupils' welfare is thorough and detailed. You and your staff know the pupils well and all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed. You and your safeguarding team ensure that you carry out appropriate checks on the suitability of all staff who work with pupils. The chair of the governing body is also the safeguarding governor. Her extensive knowledge and expertise enables her to thoroughly monitor all areas of safeguarding.

You introduced the safeguarding monitoring and reaction team forms and all staff know how to use them effectively. You and your safeguarding team meet regularly and discuss all concerns raised about pupils. As a result, the school has effective referral procedures and leaders take action swiftly and monitor their effectiveness closely. You have ensured that all staff and governors receive appropriate training in child protection.

Pupils spoken with say that they feel safe in school and know who to go to if they have any concerns. They also say that bullying is very rare and when it does happen, teachers deal with it effectively. Inspection evidence and the views of parents and staff also support this. Pupils are polite and respectful to each other and to staff.

The relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. As a result, behaviour in lessons and conduct around the clean and tidy school site are exemplary. You have succeeded in creating a very warm, inclusive and caring environment where pupils and staff feel valued and supported.

Inspection findings

- Since the last inspection in 2013, you and your leaders have implemented thorough monitoring systems which show that the quality of teaching is good and better in all lessons. During our joint visits to classrooms, we were able to confirm this. You and your senior leadership group carry out frequent monitoring of teaching and learning based on a carefully planned monitoring schedule. You provide detailed feedback to staff and you check the effect of any professional development on the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils. As a result, all teachers provide more challenge for all pupils, including the disadvantaged and the most able pupils. Teachers use targeted questioning effectively to probe pupils' deeper understanding and support their progress.
- The numerous teaching assistants are effective in supporting pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities through an effective use of questioning and modelling of explanations. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and the vast majority do. The implementation of the school's Prove It initiative provides appropriate and aspirational levels of challenge for all pupils, in all subjects, according to their ability. The vast majority of pupils respond to this challenge consistently and, as a result, they deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Outcomes for pupils overall have remained strong since the last inspection. In 2017, the progress of all pupils improved in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard or above in combined reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 improved since 2016 and is well above the national average. Similarly, the progress of all pupils in reading and writing is above average and in mathematics well above average. In 2017, the progress of the disadvantaged pupils improved in reading and mathematics. Over time, disadvantaged pupils make as much and sometimes better progress than other pupils. The progress of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities matches that of other pupils in the school.
- Most pupils enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are in certain areas of learning well below their age. Also, most children have limited English language skills. Half of the current group of children in the early years speak English as an additional language. All pupils make strong and sustained progress across the key stages and by the time they leave Year 6, most achieve the expected standards or above in reading, writing and mathematics. Current school assessment information indicates continuous improvement in all year groups. You acknowledge that the proportion of the most able pupils achieving a greater depth of understanding in reading, writing and mathematics, across the age range, needs further improvement to be at least in line with national averages.
- You and your staff work hard to ensure that attendance for all pupils, including the disadvantaged and pupils with SEN and/or disabilities, improves. You have

introduced a range of initiatives to raise the profile of attendance. Your weekly newsletters to parents indicate clearly the attendance of each class and highlights the importance of good attendance. Your parent involvement worker is working tirelessly with families and tracks and monitors thoroughly the attendance of each pupil in the school. She regularly analyses the attendance of different groups of pupils and as a result she can adapt various intervention strategies. The current attendance for all pupils is broadly in line with the national average. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEN and/or disabilities remains below the national average despite the school's continuous efforts. We agreed that more work is needed in this area.

- Governance is a strength of the school and has improved even further since the last inspection through the appointment of new governors with a wide range of skills, knowledge and expertise. The experienced and knowledgeable chair of the governing body skilfully leads the governors in providing effective and rigorous challenge to school leaders. Governors work very well together as a team. Recent training provided through the Catholic Schools Partnership Teaching School Alliance, the diocese and the local authority has increased the confidence of all governors in asking challenging questions and all know well the school's strengths and areas of improvement. Governors monitor the spending of additional funding effectively. The governing body is committed to the continuous improvement of the school and has high aspirations for the children and pupils. Governors are extremely proud of the school's caring and inclusive environment. Teaching assistants are appropriately qualified and are often university degree graduates. You and your senior leaders deploy the assistants effectively to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. As a result, the progress of these groups of pupils is similar to the progress of all pupils in the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the outcomes for the most able pupils continue to improve across all key stages, especially the achievement of pupils at greater depth in all subjects
- the attendance of all pupils continues to improve, including the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Leeds (RC), the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bradford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dimitris Spiliotis
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, senior leaders, the school's parental involvement officer, staff and governors. I held a telephone conversation with the director of education for the diocese and met with the local authority school improvement partner. I also spoke to a range of pupils and parents. I listened to pupils read and together we conducted tours of the school and lessons, looking at pupils' work and observing their learning. I also, alongside senior leaders, conducted a scrutiny of pupils' work in a range of subjects.

I scrutinised and evaluated a range of documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and school improvement. I took account of the 36 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the 33 extended responses from parents. I also took account of the 26 responses to the pupil questionnaire and the 27 responses to the staff questionnaire.