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Ruth Elmore
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Dear Mrs Elmore

Short inspection of Saint Charles' Catholic Primary School, Measham, Leicestershire

Following my visit to the school on 20 February 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 September 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. The school is a friendly, welcoming place where staff work well together. You and your staff have ensured that pupils are well cared for and enjoy their learning. They are respectful and behave well because of the good relationships with their teachers and other staff. One Year 6 pupil told me that staff, 'Keep us safe and help us to do our best. We have interesting things to learn and the staff do so many clubs for us. I don't know how they fit everything into the school day!'

Pupils are happy in school and the majority of parents and carers are positive. For example, one parent praised the 'dedicated staff' and 'academic progress' their child is making, while another parent appreciated the 'family feel' of the school. You promote a caring ethos where pupils are valued and known well by you and your staff. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the school's mission statement: 'Let all that you do be done in love. Love is made possible with respect.'

Since your appointment in 2014, you have developed clear strategic plans for what is needed to shape the future of the school and bring about improvements. Your accurate self-evaluation generates the school's policies and actions, and identifies the required staff training. For example, you recognised that the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics was not as good as it could be. You made sure that teaching and learning in mathematics improved considerably. As a result, in 2017,

higher proportions of pupils in Year 6 attained the expected and higher standards at the end of key stage 2.

The governing body provides you and your leadership team with effective challenge and support. Governors are knowledgeable and know the strengths of the school and the areas that need improvement. Governors regularly take part in relevant training and set themselves challenging targets to develop their understanding and improve their effectiveness. They place a particular focus on the school's support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and for disadvantaged pupils. However, governors do not always check that the impact of funding has been precisely evaluated by leaders to ensure that pupils are consistently making at least good progress in line with their peers.

You have dealt effectively with the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Teachers make sure that pupils understand what they are learning in their lessons. Pupils are clear about how they can check their progress during lessons and know what to do to improve their work. When observing in lessons and looking in pupils' books, I could see that teachers have consistently high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work and this is true across a range of different subjects.

You have improved the quality of teaching to ensure that in the majority of lessons teachers ensure that work is well matched to the abilities of pupils. The proportion of the most able pupils attaining the higher standards in writing and mathematics in 2017 was above national averages. You acknowledge that although there have been recent improvements, more pupils, particularly the most able pupils, can be challenged further to deepen their understanding and attain higher standards in reading.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have created a good culture of safeguarding within the school. Governors and staff benefit from regular and relevant training on child protection. They know what to do to keep pupils safe. You work well with families and refer concerns in a timely manner. Staff are vigilant and are prepared to take decisive and prompt action, when needed, to secure pupils' well-being. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and say they feel safe. They say any incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are rare but when they do occur staff deal with issues promptly and fairly. Pupils feel well cared for by staff in school. They are taught about potential risks and how to stay safe in different situations. These include how to use the internet safely and the risks from drugs and alcohol misuse.

Inspection findings

- A focus for the inspection was the quality of the teaching of reading. For at least two years, the progress pupils made in reading by the time they leave Year 6 has

been in the bottom 20% of schools nationally. You have acted to improve standards in reading by raising the profile of reading in the school so pupils have regular timetabled opportunities to read for pleasure, as well as for learning. Staff provide areas for pupils to read in their classrooms and have rejuvenated the school library so there is a wider range of good-quality books which appeal to more pupils.

- Leaders have purchased new, high-quality texts to interest and motivate pupils to read. In addition, leaders and teachers lead workshops for parents in areas of learning, such as phonics. These workshops help parents to more effectively support their children's early reading skills at home. It was clear during the inspection, that the majority of pupils enjoy reading. For example, pupils told me enthusiastically about their 'squirt' ('sit quietly, it's reading time') sessions, where staff and pupils take time to read quietly together. Pupils explained that at these times they read a variety of different genres, such as newspapers, comics and a choice of texts.
- You ensured that the leader for English received effective training in new approaches for the teaching of reading. She has successfully trialled these approaches and has subsequently trained teachers across the school to ensure that the teaching of reading is now consistently good. The information you showed me indicates that, as a result, the majority of current pupils are making good progress in reading. Where they are not, you are providing pupils with focused additional support to enable them to make better progress.
- As part of your focus on improving reading you looked at the development of pupils' early reading skills. You reviewed the teaching and learning of phonics to ensure that teaching was consistently effective across the school. You accessed good-quality staff training, through the Forest Way Teaching School Alliance, to make sure that standards remained high and pupils were more rapidly gaining the essential skills needed in order to learn to read. As a result, the teaching of phonics improved and in 2017 the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check improved further and remains above the national average.
- During the inspection, you and I looked at the progress different groups of pupils make in their learning, including pupils who speak English as an additional language. The quite different average ability in different year groups makes year-on-year comparisons of pupils' attainment difficult. You have carefully analysed pupils' prior attainment, and reviewed the frequency and reliability of current assessments. You check regularly to ensure that the progress that groups and individual pupils make in different subjects is at least good. Where it is not, you provide additional support to help pupils catch up. Leaders use a range of evidence from their checks to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and of support, in order to plan next steps for staff and pupils.
- School leaders make good use of the additional funding the school receives. They provide extra teaching for individuals and small groups. This additional support is having a positive impact on improving the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Nevertheless, leaders do not

precisely evaluate the impact of their actions to ensure that these pupils make similar progress to other pupils, particularly in reading.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the impact of government funding is rigorously evaluated to ensure that pupils across the school who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged make the same consistently good progress as their peers
- actions to improve the teaching and learning of reading are maintained so a greater proportion of pupils attain the expected standards or higher.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Innes-Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, the assistant headteacher, who is also the leader for English, and the leader for mathematics. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day and I met with a group of pupils. I met with five members of the governing body and had a telephone conversation with the director for the Forest Way Teaching School Alliance.

We visited classrooms and I looked at a range of pupils' work with the leaders for English and mathematics. We discussed the progress of different groups of pupils and the school's plans for improvement. I considered the responses of 38 parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I also considered the responses of 16 staff to Ofsted's online survey for them and the 33 responses to the pupils' survey. I scrutinised evidence from a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance, procedures and records for safeguarding and behaviour, information on how the pupil premium is spent, an analysis of attendance and a number of policy documents. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, on the playground and during lunchtime.