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Mrs Sue O'Brien
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Dear Mrs O'Brien

Short inspection of St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 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 October 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your vision to ensure that the school is fully inclusive is clear in all that you do. You have created a culture where staff know families well and can therefore respond to their needs swiftly and effectively. Staff feel well supported and staff morale is high. Staff are proud to work at the school. You place high importance on developing pupils' confidence and building their resilience. Consequently, pupils are happy and display positive attitudes to their learning. You place equal weighting on supporting pupils' pastoral development and expect all pupils to be polite and courteous. The vast majority of pupils behave well.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. The parents I talked to during the inspection are happy with the quality of education provided for their children. Parents feel well supported. All parents who responded to the online Ofsted survey Parent View said that their child is happy and feels safe. One parent commented on the 'great relationships between teachers and pupils'. Another said: 'the headteacher and teachers are very approachable and deal with problems efficiently'.

Since the previous inspection, you have ensured that middle leaders are increasingly accountable for their areas of responsibility. They have a clear rationale for the curriculum and have rewritten long-term plans to ensure consistency across the school. You ensure that they have the time to check the quality of provision within their subjects. Strong partnerships with the local cluster of schools provide opportunities for teachers to share best practice and moderate pupils' work. You also ensure that staff have the opportunity to contribute towards the school

development plan. This means that they understand the key priorities for improvement. However, you acknowledge that the development plan would benefit from the incorporation of interim milestones to judge the impact of actions on pupils' progress.

Since the previous inspection, you have ensured wider opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills. Pupils are encouraged to help and support each other. You place high importance on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Effective questioning by teachers ensures that pupils' misconceptions are addressed. During the inspection, I saw pupils who were confident to discuss and share their ideas.

You set aspirational targets for pupils. Detailed tracking of pupils' progress and attainment enables you to identify pupils who are at risk of underachieving, or who need additional support. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined is improving year on year. Last year, 58% of pupils achieved this standard compared with 52% in 2016. Inspection evidence would indicate that the improving trend is set to continue.

You, your senior leadership team and governors know the strengths of the school well. However, you are not complacent. Your assessment of what needs to be done to improve the school further is accurate. You and governors acknowledge that the quality of writing across the curriculum needs to improve. You have rightly prioritised improving the progress in writing of White British disadvantaged boys and most-able pupils in particular.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff and governors take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. The assistant headteacher with responsibility for safeguarding provides strong leadership. She ensures that referrals to other agencies and professionals are made in a timely manner. This means that pupils and their families receive the necessary support quickly. The school's record-keeping is detailed and of high quality, showing the impact of actions taken. You ensure effective and regular training for all staff and governors. This includes regular updates in daily staff briefings.

Pupils told me that bullying is rare. If it does happen, they are confident that staff will deal with it quickly and effectively. A very small number of pupils, in response to the Ofsted online survey, said that they did not feel that bullying is always dealt with effectively. However, the vast majority of pupils in response to the online survey did say that there was an adult they could talk to if they were worried about something.

Inspection findings

- Pupils' attendance has improved this year and is now broadly in line with the national average. Persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils had improved significantly. You are disappointed that, despite your focus on improving attendance, persistent absence still remains stubbornly high. You are tackling this through a wider range of rewards and sanctions. This is beginning to show

some impact. However, persistent absence remains too high despite your efforts. Consequently, you rightly prioritise continuing to improve attendance as a whole-school priority.

- In 2017, the progress made by pupils in writing was not good enough. This compared to 2016, when pupils made progress in writing that was well above that of similar pupils nationally. You have rightly identified improving writing as a key priority. Leaders have started to take effective steps to tackle this, for example the introduction of 'non negotiables' for writing with a focus on ensuring that pupils get the basics right. Writing for different purposes in religious education provides pupils with opportunities to write at greater length. These actions are beginning to have an impact, especially in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2. However, teachers' approach to the teaching of writing is not consistent across the curriculum. For example, in Year 6, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Since the previous inspection, you have placed high importance on improving the quality of provision in the early years. You have invested in improving both the inside and outside space. The early years leader ensures that the environment is language rich. There is a focused daily teacher-led session to promote children's early reading, writing and number skills. Children are focused and engaged in their learning. There are many opportunities for mark-making, both inside and out. As a result, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception is improving year on year and is now closer to the national average.
- Phonics is taught systematically on a daily basis. You ensure that teaching assistants are given the same training as teachers to ensure consistency in the teaching of phonics. These approaches are supporting pupils in achieving improving outcomes in the phonics screening check, with particularly strong outcomes for pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- During the inspection, I wanted to check the school's approach to reading, particularly in key stage 1. The progress made by pupils in reading by the end of key stage 2 improved in 2017. However, attainment in key stage 1 declined. You have placed high importance on developing a culture of reading across the school. Pupils are very happy with the new library. They also enjoy the work they do with visiting authors. This is helping to raise the profile of reading across the school. Based on current school information, an increasing proportion of pupils are on track to achieve the expected standard and higher standard in key stage 1 in reading this year.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics due to the consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics across the school. High expectations are set for pupils. Pupils talk positively about the challenge in their mathematics lessons. They enjoy the different 'mild', 'fiery' and 'hot' activities. Work in pupils' books shows that they regularly explain their methods. Teachers place high importance on teaching the language of reasoning. In 2017, pupils in Year 6 made progress above similar pupils nationally. Current school information and inspection findings show that current pupils continue to make good progress in

mathematics from their different starting points.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is a consistent approach to the teaching of writing across the curriculum to accelerate pupils' progress and to ensure that an increasing proportion of pupils meet and exceed the expect standard
- there are continued efforts to reduce persistent absence more rapidly
- action plans show clear timescales, interim milestones and the impact of proposed actions on pupils' progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Michele Costello
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I made visits to all classes with you. I also looked at the work in pupils' books with the deputy headteacher. I met with you, a number of staff and three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also had a telephone conversation with the local authority school improvement partner.

I took account of 21 responses from parents to Ofsted's survey Parent View, 30 responses from the staff survey and 38 responses from the pupil survey. I met with a group of middle leaders. I talked informally to pupils during lunchtime and in lessons. I met formally with a group of pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6. I spoke to a number of parents as they dropped their children off at the start of the school day. I listened to some pupils from Years 1 and 2 read and discussed their reading with them.

I examined a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation, assessment information, governors' minutes, attendance and behaviour logs and safeguarding records.