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Ms Caroline Caille
Headteacher
St Augustine's Catholic Primary and Nursery School, A Voluntary Academy
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Dear Ms Caille

Short inspection of St Augustine's Catholic Primary and Nursery School, A Voluntary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 20 March 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 May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Pupils at St Augustine's School continue to learn and to achieve well. You have built a culture of high expectations for all, where staff and pupils strive for excellence. Relationships throughout the school are very strong. Pupils and staff flourish in the calm, respectful and purposeful atmosphere.

All parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's free-text service were united in their praise for the school. Many parents explained how quickly their children had settled into life at St Augustine's or how their older children had gone on to settle well at secondary school. Parents also reported that school staff are very friendly and approachable.

During the inspection, pupils told me they enjoy school because it is 'very friendly and welcoming'. Pupils explained that they always make new children 'feel part of St Augustine's family' and that they 'don't judge people as we all get along together'. Pupils say teachers make lessons fun and plan 'good trips', including camping and visits to the dinosaur museum.

Pupils in all key stages make good progress across a range of subjects because teaching is strong and no time is wasted in lessons. Pupils respond very well to adults' high expectations.

As a result, pupils settle to learning quickly, they work hard, they are very keen to

contribute to lessons and they take pride in presenting their work carefully.

At the last inspection, the school was asked to give greater attention to spelling, punctuation and grammar. You have done this successfully by helping staff to understand what pupils in each year group should be able to achieve in these skills. In addition, you have developed an effective system to check that all pupils are making good progress towards the end of year age-related expectations for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

You are well supported by an able team of senior leaders and skilled governors. All leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. You and your team act quickly to provide support where it is needed. While pupils make good progress across all key stages, you are not complacent about the school's success. The school's improvement plan is well focused on further improving standards so that all outcomes in all key stages are at least in line with the national average. However, the improvement plan is not precise about the end goals for pupils' outcomes or how leaders will check for success at different points along the way.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team, including governors, have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. School staff have up-to-date training so they have a good understanding of the school's systems for keeping pupils safe, and of areas of risk, including female genital mutilation.

Pupils say school is a safe and happy place where there is 'always someone to talk to or comfort you'. Pupils explained to me how they learn how to keep themselves safe through special talks with the police, learning about racism and hate crime through work with Nottingham Forest Football Club, and school assemblies. Pupils report bullying is very rare. Pupils' attendance is above the national average and persistent absence is rare. Any concerns about attendance are followed up rigorously. Your team works well with families and outside agencies to ensure that pupils have the support they need to stay safe. Records of any concerns about pupils are of high quality.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed the areas that I would review to check if the school remained good. I looked particularly at the pupils' writing, how effectively leaders are ensuring that the pupil premium funding is used to support disadvantaged pupils, and the school's approach to managing behaviour, and how well pupils do in science.
- You and your team have successfully focused on improving teaching and learning in writing. Children get off to a good start in the early years and key stage 1, because the teaching of phonics is consistently strong. All adults are well trained in this area. As a result, children and pupils develop the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to make very good attempts at spelling simple words.

- Since the last inspection, you have improved teachers' skills in teaching grammar. As a result, pupils are making much stronger progress and standards are higher in this area. For example in a key stage 1 lesson, pupils explained to me that they wanted to use an expanded noun phrase to describe the monster. Pupils went on to write an impressive description of the monster. Older pupils were buzzing with excitement in their 'grammar blast' session, as they identified subordinate clauses while studying Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'. In addition to improving the teaching of grammar, you have also raised the profile of correct spelling by developing successful ways of motivating pupils to learn how to spell important words.
- Pupils' books from all key stages show that progress in writing is improving but standards in writing still remain lower than in reading and mathematics. Pupils' progress in writing is not as rapid as it could be because pupils do not take sufficient responsibility for editing and improving their own writing.
- The pupil premium funding is used to provide a range of support for disadvantaged pupils, including additional teaching and support for pupils' well-being and emotional needs. You have a rigorous approach to checking the progress of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium. You use this assessment information effectively to plan activities to meet pupils' needs, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. Current assessment information and work in pupils' books show the progress of disadvantaged pupils is improving.
- The school's pupil premium strategy is not sharply focused on addressing specific barriers and areas of need. The strategy does not make clear enough the impact that leaders and governors wish to see. As a result, the governing body is not as effective as it could be in checking the impact of the funding and holding leaders to account.
- Pupils' very good behaviour is a strength of the school and is consistently high in lessons and around the school. Since the last inspection, you and your team have revised the behaviour policy. The policy is working well because it is understood by all pupils and it is used consistently by all adults. Leaders have effective systems to check to see if there are patterns of behaviour that need following up. School staff work closely with parents and value their support.
- Pupils say they like the rewards for good behaviour. They understand the sanctions and they report that sanctions are rarely needed. You provide good support for pupils with challenging behaviour and those who could be at risk of exclusion. Pupils value the school's learning mentors who 'help children to deal with behaviour and family stuff'. The school is inclusive and exclusions are rare.
- Science is taught on a regular basis. Science work in pupils' books matches the good standards seen in other subjects. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their science lessons and say they learn about a wide range of scientific areas including particles, humans, animals, planets, acids and alkalis. During the inspection, pupils explained how they have regular opportunities to carry out experiments and to discuss what they have learned from the findings. Pupils described experiments, including tests to find out about the strength of magnets, how to repeat tests, and to make sure that scientific testing is fair.
- Science leaders make regular checks to ensure that standards in science are

maintained. Current assessment information shows that pupils in key stage 2 are on track to attain standards in line with the national average and outcomes in science for disadvantaged pupils are set to improve this year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school improvement plan and the pupil premium strategy enable governors to hold leaders to account more effectively for improving pupils' outcomes
- teachers consistently support pupils to develop the skills they need to edit and to improve their writing.

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 Nottingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Carol Smith
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I carried out a walk around the school with you. We visited all classes. We reviewed pupils' books to consider the standard of work and the progress being made in writing and science. I looked at the range of quality of information on the school's website.

I talked to a group of pupils and also spoke informally to pupils at different times of the day. I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and science leaders. I also spoke with other members of staff to discuss the school's work and policies. I met with members of the governing body and reviewed documentation relating to governance.

I reviewed a range of the school's documentation including policies, safeguarding and training information, monitoring information from the school and the diocese, assessment information and your school improvement plan. I spoke with 10 parents at the beginning of the school day and I took account of five parent responses made through Ofsted's free-text service. I also considered the nine staff responses to the staff questionnaire.