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Mrs Paula Graham
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Graham

Short inspection of Ss Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 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 June 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have brought a renewed drive and rigour to improving opportunities for pupils. Supported by the leadership team, you have created a calm and focused environment within the school. Governors and staff share your high aspirations to ensure that pupils are able to 'grow in knowledge and love'.

You and your staff have worked to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. As a result, the quality of teaching at the school has improved. Staff appreciate the opportunities that they have to share their knowledge with colleagues within the supportive culture you have created. This has been particularly helpful to staff new to teaching. You have ensured that staff have the skills and knowledge they need to support pupils' learning effectively. Staff use assessment information to identify pupils' next steps in their learning. As a result, pupils know what they need to do to improve, particularly in mathematics. Teachers identify the reasons why pupils are struggling, and give them the help they need to catch up quickly. Pupils appreciate the challenges they are set. Pupils told me that 'they really stretch our brains'. You have acted swiftly to address issues around the teaching of reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics. However, you acknowledge that this needs to be further embedded, and that pupils need to apply these skills so that their progress accelerates.

Pupils are well mannered and polite. Their positive attitudes to learning, and the positive relationships fostered within the school, contribute to their good progress. Pupils take pride in their work and work cooperatively together in lessons. Older

pupils take their responsibilities seriously as, for example, members of committees, as play leaders at breaktimes and as buddy readers with the younger pupils. They enjoy the wide range of sports, including yoga, football, judo and swimming. Pupils are very proud of their achievements at the local swimming gala. Pupils appreciate the clubs which enrich the curriculum, including chess, drama, 'glee' club and science club. They enjoy the residential trips and visits in the local area, including to the parish church where pupils in Year 3 said, 'It was wonderful because we had time to reflect.' They are proud to support others through fundraising activities organised by pupils and supported by the parents' committee. Pupils are extremely proud of their school and their community and the contributions they make.

The majority of parents and carers with whom I spoke during the inspection were very positive about the school. They feel that staff are very caring and helpful, and that they always have time to listen to worries and concerns. This was summed up in a comment: 'it's like a family'. Parents feel that communication is improving and that they are always made to feel very welcome in the school. They feel well informed about the progress that their children are making. Parents know how they can help their children at home, particularly with reading and spelling. You have identified the need to build on the positive improvements in involving parents so some better understand that absence from school can hinder the progress that their children make.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is effective and fit for purpose, and meets all the statutory requirements, including online filtering and monitoring arrangements. Systems for checking the suitability of staff to work with children are diligently applied. Staff receive up-to-date training, robust systems are in place and roles and responsibilities are understood and followed correctly. As a result, the most vulnerable children are identified quickly, and appropriate help is provided in a timely manner.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They feel confident that there is always someone to talk with, and particularly appreciate the 'friendship bench' in the playground. A pupil said, 'If you feel sad at breaktimes you can sit on it and someone will come to see if you are ok.' Pupils understand about the different types of bullying, and assert that there is no bullying in school. Pupils are confident that should an incident arise, a member of staff would sort it out very quickly. Pupils know how to keep safe online. They appreciate the work that teachers have done on safety, especially with social media and playing online games that are appropriate for their age.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we looked at several key lines of enquiry. The first was about attendance. You know the families very well, and understand the specific reasons why pupils are absent, for example due to ill health. You work closely with these families to ensure that they have the help they need. You respond

promptly when pupils are absent from school, particularly the most vulnerable, to ensure that they are safe. You work with a number of agencies to provide the help these pupils need to establish morning routines, as well as any other help they may need. As a result, the attendance for a small proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is improving slowly, especially for disadvantaged pupils.

- You have introduced a range of imaginative incentives to highlight the importance of attending school regularly, including trophies, certificates and celebrations in assembly. However, attendance remains just below the national average. You acknowledge that you need to build on the positive relationships that you have developed with parents to ensure that even more understand that absences from school can hinder the progress their children make.
- Leaders quickly identified the reasons for the dip in pupils' attainment and progress in writing and mathematics in key stage 1 in 2017. You have ensured that staff have the skills that they need to support pupils' learning. You have worked with other colleagues to share knowledge and expertise and to raise expectations. You have worked with parents to explain how you teach reading and phonics. As a result, they are able to help their children at home. Pupils take pride in their work. Work in pupils' books shows that teachers use assessments effectively to ensure that the tasks they set meet the needs of pupils appropriately, and provide appropriate challenge. Teachers work with other colleagues, in other schools, to ensure that their judgements are accurate and to share expertise and ideas.
- In mathematics, teachers use assessment effectively to identify the precise gaps in pupils' learning. Staff have received the training they need to help pupils to catch up quickly. Misconceptions are addressed swiftly, and pupils know what they need to do to improve their learning. Pupils appreciate working in small groups to tackle concepts they find difficult. As a result of recent training, staff use questioning skilfully to encourage pupils to refine their ideas and develop their answers. School assessment information shows that the majority of pupils are on track to reach the standard expected nationally by the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- We also looked at the actions you have taken to ensure that pupils reach the expected standards in writing by the end of key stage 2. Leaders have accurately identified that pupils do not routinely apply their grammar, punctuation and spelling knowledge in their own writing. You have ensured that teachers, particularly those new to teaching, have the confidence and skills they need to use assessment accurately. Teachers have worked with other colleagues in order to refine their skills, and, as a result, they identify the precise gaps in pupils' learning. Work in pupils' books shows that learning activities accurately match pupils' needs.
- Staff use questions skilfully to encourage pupils to refine their ideas and develop their vocabulary. Teachers make learning fun by providing interesting stimuli for

writing. For example, in Year 4, pupils crawled through a 'tunnel' before writing about what they could see, hear, touch and smell, and then explained how they felt. Pupils used a range of descriptive vocabulary, including, 'I felt very anxious as I waited nervously for my turn to enter the dank, gloomy tunnel ahead.' Pupils know what they need to do to improve their learning. They take pride in their work, and presentation is improving. You have ensured that staff have the knowledge they need to accelerate the progress that pupils make in their writing, particularly the most able pupils. The school's assessment information shows the rates of pupils' progress are improving. However, despite improvements in the quality of pupils' work seen in books during the inspection, not a high enough proportion are working at a greater depth.

- Finally, we looked at how you support the small proportion of disadvantaged pupils in school. You have accurately identified the key barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. You have correctly focused on improving speech and language development in the early years and in key stage 1. As a result, an increasing proportion of disadvantaged children in the early years are reaching a good level of development. The school's assessment information shows that the majority of current pupils are on track to reach the standard expected nationally by the end of Year 2.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils more widely apply their mathematical problem-solving and reasoning skills
- pupils' progress accelerates, particularly for the most able, so that a higher proportion are working at a greater depth in key stage 2
- the good relationships you already have with parents are built on so that some pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, attend school as frequently as possible.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Stringer
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, other members of the leadership team and staff. I also met with the chair of the governing body and five governors. I also met

with a representative of the local authority and a representative from the diocese. I conducted a learning walk with you, and we visited classrooms, where I had the opportunity to speak with pupils and look at their work. I met formally with a group of pupils and spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I also took account of the 96 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, and 47 free-text comments were received. I scrutinised pupils' assessment information, the school's self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan. I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child-protection procedures and practices.