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25 May 2018

Mrs Stacey Beale
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Dear Mrs Beale

Short inspection of St Luke's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 May 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Under your leadership, the school has gone from strength to strength. You have improved the quality of teaching and learning and have developed leadership capacity by delegating responsibilities to others. The head of school leads the day-to-day running of the school effectively, while you focus on the leadership of the recently formed federation. Middle leaders benefit from the opportunity to work alongside colleagues within the federation to share good practice and develop their leadership skills.

Pupils show very positive attitudes to learning. They are extremely polite and their conduct around school is excellent. Pupils want to do well and they work hard and productively in lessons. They listen carefully to adults' explanations and settle to their work quickly. Pupils work and play happily together. They told me that they enjoy school because it is fun and everyone gets along well together. Pupils also appreciate the wide range of trips, visitors, clubs and sporting activities you provide.

Through your school values, pupils develop into thoughtful, caring and responsible members of the school community. They demonstrate respect and tolerance and support one another well. For example, the school's 'hazard heroes' make a strong contribution to helping others through their response to worries that pupils place in the school's 'worry box'. The 'hazard heroes' help their peers individually or lead

whole-school assemblies to address common worries, such as being afraid of the dark.

You have addressed the areas for improvement from the previous inspection well. Teachers have received training to support them in planning activities in mathematics that require pupils to reason and solve problems. You have also purchased additional resources to improve this aspect of the mathematics curriculum. Work in books shows that pupils regularly apply their knowledge and understanding to problem-solving tasks and are developing their reasoning skills through explaining their thinking. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 has been above the national average for the past two years. Similarly, the proportion of pupils working at the higher standard was above the national average in 2016 and 2017.

Since the previous inspection, you have developed pupils' behaviour for learning successfully. Pupils are now independent and resilient learners. For example, target sheets in pupils' books help them to know what they can do well and what their next steps are. Consequently, pupils take responsibility for their learning and are keen to challenge themselves.

Through regular monitoring, you have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. However, leaders' action plans lack precision. They do not reflect the deep knowledge that leaders have of what needs to improve specifically. Many of the success criteria also lack precision, which means that leaders and governors are not able to evaluate fully the impact of their actions on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.

Governors are committed to the school and hold leaders to account effectively. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This is because they use a wide range of evidence to evaluate the school's performance, including your detailed reports and their own visits to the school. These visits focus on priorities in the school development plan to enable governors to concentrate on the most important areas for improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Safeguarding checks on staff, volunteers and governors are thorough. Staff and governors receive regular training to ensure that they have up-to-date knowledge. Staff record any concerns about pupils' safety and welfare thoroughly and leaders monitor vulnerable pupils closely. This means that leaders are able to respond to patterns in emerging issues quickly.

Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that there is an adult they can talk to if they have a problem. They understand the difference between bullying and falling out, and state that bullying is rare. The pupil-led 'safeguarding board' is proud of its role in supporting pupils to feel happy and safe at school. Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They have a good understanding of how

to stay safe when using the internet, for example by not sharing their passwords and not giving personal information to people they do not know.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to explore how effectively leaders are maintaining the high standards achieved at the end of key stages 1 and 2 in 2016 and 2017, and if all groups of pupils are achieving similarly well.
- Good teaching and effective interventions mean that most pupils make strong progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics in almost all year groups. Leaders make regular checks on pupils' progress. They meet with teachers to identify pupils who are not making the progress they should and provide additional support for individuals and small groups. Leaders monitor the impact of this support to ensure that it is effective in accelerating pupils' progress. However, you and your leaders acknowledge that the school's current assessment system does not enable leaders to track pupils' progress precisely enough. This means that not all pupils who would benefit from additional support receive it.
- Leaders and staff know pupils well. They identify barriers to pupils' learning accurately and provide appropriate support. Interventions for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who need support with managing their feelings or behaviour are particularly successful. As a result, the majority of these pupils make good progress.
- The proportion of pupils working at the higher standard in each year group varies. Observations in lessons and work in books show that the most able pupils do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable. This is because learning does not consistently challenge them. Too often, the most able pupils spend time completing work they can already do before moving on to tasks that challenge them.
- My second line of enquiry was to look at how well the curriculum meets pupils' needs and interests and enables them to make strong progress in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Leaders have thought carefully about the design of the curriculum and staff plan topics to meet pupils' needs and interests. Subject leaders make termly checks on the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility. Teachers evaluate pupils' learning and use this to inform their teaching. As a result, pupils make good progress in the development of knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects. Where teachers' subject knowledge is strongest, pupils make rapid progress, for example in history and geography in key stage 1. Work in books shows that excellent teaching of personal, social and health education leads to pupils making substantial progress in these aspects of learning.
- My third line of enquiry was to find out if children in the early years make good progress from their starting points, particularly boys.
- School assessment information shows that the majority of children enter the early years with knowledge and skills that are below those typical for their age.

At the end of the Reception Year, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been above the national average for the past two years. This represents strong progress from children's starting points. Current children are making similarly good progress.

- In response to fewer boys than girls achieving a good level of development in 2016 and 2017, leaders have planned more topics that appeal to the interests of boys, for example 'Splendid skies' and 'Around the world in 80 days'. Leaders have developed the outdoor learning environment and adults question boys while they play in order to extend their learning. Staff also plan literacy learning linked to books that both boys and girls will enjoy. For example, during the inspection, we saw boys and girls thoroughly engrossed in retelling the story of 'The Gingerbread Man'. Consequently, boys' progress is accelerating. Work in books and the school's assessment information show that boys are making good progress from their starting points in literacy and mathematics.
- My fourth line of enquiry was to investigate how effectively teachers meet the needs and interests of girls in reading in key stage 1 and in mathematics in key stage 2, in order to enable them to make strong progress and achieve high standards.
- Leaders are rightly focusing on increasing the proportion of pupils working at the higher standard in reading. They are aware that, in 2016 and 2017, the proportion of girls working at greater depth in reading at the end of Year 2 was below the national average. In response to this, teachers are trialling a new approach to the teaching of reading in some classes. This has been successful in developing pupils' understanding of vocabulary and has led to a significant increase in the proportion of pupils working at the higher standard, particularly girls. Teachers also ensure that pupils read regularly at home and school. However, while girls' attainment at the higher standard is rising in some classes, this is not yet consistent across the school.
- Leaders have identified reasons for the difference in the achievement of girls and boys in mathematics. They have begun to put effective strategies in place to accelerate girls' progress. Work in books shows that the recently introduced 'signpost' approach to problem-solving has increased girls' confidence and their willingness to attempt increasingly challenging tasks. However, leaders acknowledge that, although the gap between boys and girls is closing, there is still work to do because boys continue to outperform girls in most classes.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- objectives in the school development plan focus more precisely on what needs to improve and include tight, measurable outcomes to enable the impact of actions to be evaluated fully
- assessment systems are refined to give leaders and staff a more accurate view of the progress pupils are making from their different starting points

- teachers use assessment information and their knowledge of what pupils can already do to set tasks that sufficiently challenge the most able pupils
- girls' attainment in reading at greater depth in key stage 1 and girls' progress in mathematics in key stage 2 continue to rise so that they are consistently strong in all classes.

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 Telford and Wrekin. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Claire Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the head of school, the special educational needs coordinator and the head of school from your partner school within the federation. I met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and two governors. I also met with your school improvement partner. I undertook one learning walk with you and a second learning walk with you and the head of school. I looked at pupils' work in a range of books with you and other senior leaders. I held a meeting with representatives from the school council and talked to pupils in lessons. I also listened to a group of pupils read. I examined a range of documentation, including information relating to current pupils' attainment and progress, the school development plan and your evaluation of the school's performance. I also scrutinised a range of safeguarding documents. I spoke to parents and carers at the start of the school day and took into account the 24 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.