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Ursula Clark
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Dear Miss Clark

Short inspection of St Swithun Wells Catholic Primary School, Chandler's Ford

Following my visit to the school on 15 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 September 2013.

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 built the school on a clear set of values based on a strong Catholic ethos. These values focus on enabling pupils to achieve well and, as you explained, 'to be the best they can be'. Senior leaders and governors understand the strengths of the school as well as the areas needing improvement. They can point to the positive impact of their actions and have plans to improve the school further. Morale among staff is high. All who responded to the staff survey agreed that they enjoyed working at the school and felt proud to be part of the school's team.

The school is a welcoming, inclusive community where pupils and their families, from a wide range of backgrounds, are made to feel involved and valued. Pupils, who arrive at the school from different countries speaking little or no English, are quickly helped to learn the language and make good progress. One such pupil commented on how pleased she was that her classmates are 'so happy to have me in the school'. Pupils trained as young interpreters play an important role in helping those new pupils who do not have a secure grasp of English to settle quickly.

Pupils behave well and have strong, positive attitudes to learning. They concentrate and work hard because they find their work interesting and are keen to achieve the high expectations that teachers have of them. Pupils grow to become increasingly confident, articulate individuals, who take responsibility and show great pride in

their school. For example, several parents commented on how impressed they were at the mature way that pupils in Year 6 conduct tours of the school for new parents.

Pupils achieve well and make increasingly good progress in the school. In 2017, outcomes at the end of key stage 2 improved sharply so that levels of attainment were well above the national average. Pupils also achieved well at the end of key stage 1. Pupils currently in the school are also making good progress, including the few disadvantaged pupils. You rightly put this improved progress down to an unswerving focus on improving the quality of teaching and raising the level of challenge, especially for the most able pupils. However, you recognise that more needs to be done to fully embed the challenge for the most able across the school. More sharing of the strongest teaching practice is also needed to ensure consistently good teaching.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One spoke for many when they said: 'The school has a great community feel about it and the children are happy and thriving.' Several commented on the strong support that pupils and their families receive from all at the school. Staff build positive trusting relationships with pupils. They take great care to provide pupils with any help that they need, including for their social and emotional needs. Staff actively involve parents when the need arises.

At the previous inspection, inspectors asked you to improve systems for assessment in the early years foundation stage so that records fully reflect all children's achievement. Staff now carry out a wide range of assessments of children's learning across all areas of learning. These assessments enable leaders to evaluate children's progress and make any adjustments needed to secure good progress for all children.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils feel safe in school and trust adults to take good care of them. Parents echo this view. One said: 'Staff at school are professional and have children's needs at heart.' All staff are keenly aware of their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. Leaders have made sure that the right training is in place so that all understand how to recognise and report any concerns. Staff record even minor concerns promptly because they may be needed later to complete a clear picture of wider concerns.

Even young pupils have a good understanding of bullying. Leaders teach pupils the acronym 'STOP' to explain that bullying is something that happens 'several times on purpose'. Most pupils struggle to remember an incident of bullying. However, on the rare occasions that it does happen, it is dealt with quickly and effectively when staff are told about it. Pupils learn how to stay safe in a range of situations, including online, around fire and on the road. Visitors from the police and fire brigade help to drive these lessons home.

Policies, protocols and procedures are securely in place to make sure that only

suitable people are allowed to work in the school. Governors check that records are kept up to date and are fully compliant.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I focused particularly on three aspects of the school's work. We investigated the reasons for the much-improved outcomes at the end of Year 6 in 2017, and to what extent these improvements are being sustained. Pupils made rapid progress in Years 5 and 6 last academic year because of very strong teaching. Together with senior leaders, you have placed an unswerving focus on ensuring that these strengths are seen consistently across the school. You know each member of staff's strengths and weaknesses, and have provided suitable training, coaching and support to help each one improve. Senior leaders have played a vital role in modelling strong teaching and sharing this practice across the school. You agree that this drive for improvement needs to continue so that all teaching is of high quality across the school.
- Senior leaders point to the strong assessment systems and procedures in the school that have underpinned the improvements in teaching and learning. Teachers have an increasingly thorough understanding of each pupil's learning, so they recognise when pupils need extra support or greater challenge, and adapt their teaching accordingly.
- I also explored how well teaching enables the most able pupils to achieve the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportions of pupils who achieved the higher standards at the end of Year 6 last year were above those seen nationally, especially in reading and writing. However, more girls than boys achieved these standards in reading and writing.
- Pupils read widely and often. Teachers introduce pupils to exciting texts that provide strong stimuli for writing. Pupils write well in a range of styles. They regularly edit their work and find ways of making their writing even more convincing and effective for their intended audience. Pupils are self-critical and the most able set targets for themselves to improve. Boys currently in the school are achieving in line with girls because teachers ensure that work sparks boys' interest. Teachers offer pupils ways to put their own stamp and individual style on their writing, which further fuels boys' enthusiasm.
- Leaders have placed a strong focus on equipping pupils with fluency in mathematics. Pupils apply their knowledge to solve challenging problems and to tackle activities that demand mathematical reasoning. Staff expect even young pupils to explain and justify their answers, which ensures that pupils think carefully and strengthen their growing understanding of mathematics.
- I also looked at how well pupils achieve in the wider curriculum. The curriculum provides a wide range of interesting opportunities for learning across a range of subjects. Pupils also have regular opportunities to apply their skills in writing to a broad range of subjects and audiences. Where the opportunity arises, pupils use their mathematical knowledge in such subjects as science. Science receives a high profile in the school, and pupils of all ages have the opportunity to plan experiments to find things out for themselves. Displays in the school also point to

pupils' successes in art, where they use a range of media to produce careful, attractive work. Leaders ensure that pupils receive high-quality specialist teaching in physical education and sports, music and French.

- The curriculum is further brought to life by visits to interesting places such as Sea City, where pupils went to learn more about the Titanic. Pupils also talked about visits to Butser Ancient Farm and to an art gallery, for example. There are many clubs and activities for pupils that are run outside the school day. These include sports clubs, but also others, such as gardening and cookery.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they fully embed the challenge provided to the most able pupils
- the strongest teaching in school is shared more extensively so that pupils' progress is accelerated further.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Portsmouth (RC), the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Bruce Waelend
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I had meetings with you and the deputy headteacher, other leaders and five members of the governing body. I spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone. You and I visited all classes in the school, with the deputy headteacher, to observe teaching and learning. Together we looked at pupils' work. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including at playtime, and had a meeting with a group of 19 pupils. I considered 17 responses to the staff survey and 70 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 41 written responses. At the start of the day, I spoke to several parents. I evaluated a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation documents and development plans. I looked closely at the school's safeguarding policies, procedures and checks, and spoke with several members of staff to test out their understanding of these arrangements.