

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



20 June 2018

Mrs Lianne Lomas  
Headteacher  
St Patrick's Catholic Primary School  
Hullen Edge Road  
Elland  
West Yorkshire  
HX5 0QY

Dear Mrs Lomas

### **Short inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School**

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 April 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since your appointment in January 2018, you have shown a drive and determination to move the school forward. You have carried out a thorough self-evaluation of the school. Consequently, you have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and the main priorities for improvement. With support from your leadership team, you are taking actions to address these. For example, you have trained staff to improve the accuracy of teacher assessments.

Staff feel valued. They fully support you in your aim to tackle the main priorities for improvement quickly. One member of staff said: 'Our goal is to make sure that all pupils are content, safe and achieving.' Staff told me that they are given lots of training, support and advice to help them to improve teaching and learning.

Parents and carers are supportive of most of the changes you have made since your appointment. One parent said, 'The ethos of the school and overall feeling around the school is welcoming, friendly and nurturing.' However, a small number of parents express concern about recent staffing turnover.

Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They are polite and respectful to visitors, staff and each other. Pupils told me that they enjoy helping others. They talk warmly about the opportunities to be involved in community projects, such as

finding ways to engage with elderly members of the community who may be lonely. Pupils understand the importance of British values. They can talk with understanding about respect, democracy and the rule of law. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures and gave examples of recent learning on Judaism and Islam.

The governing body is committed to improving the school. However, governors acknowledge that pupils' outcomes have declined since the previous inspection. Governors also agree that in the past they have not held leaders to account effectively enough. Since your appointment, you have commissioned a review of governance. Governors are beginning to implement the recommendations from this recent review. This has prompted governors to hold leaders to account by asking more challenging questions. This increased challenge is reflected in recent governing body minutes. Further work is needed to ensure that the findings from the recent governance review are implemented in full.

Historically, pupils' attendance has been good. However, this year, pupils' attendance has declined to below the national average. Leaders are aware of this and have, rightly, prioritised improving pupils' attendance as an important next step.

Since the previous inspection, pupils' outcomes have declined. In 2016, pupils made average progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. However, in 2017, although pupils' progress in reading and mathematics remained average, progress in writing was well below average. In 2016, pupils' attainment in key stage 1 in reading and mathematics was close to average, but below average in writing. In 2017, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics declined and there was no improvement in writing. As a result, you have made improving pupils' outcomes a main priority since your appointment, particularly in writing.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff safeguarding training is updated regularly. Subsequently, staff understand the important role they play in keeping pupils safe. They log all concerns, no matter how small. This ensures that appropriate actions are taken to support pupils and their families when necessary.

Pupils told me that they feel safe in school. Most parents who responded to the online Ofsted survey, Parent View, agree that their children feel safe in school. A small number of parents do not think that the school deals effectively with bullying. However, most pupils I spoke to told me that isolated bullying incidents are dealt with effectively by staff.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe on the internet. Pupils also learn how to keep themselves safe in other areas, for example on the road.

## Inspection findings

- An area for improvement from the previous inspection was to improve teaching and learning. Since your appointment, you have strengthened the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and identified the main areas for improvement. All teachers are set clear, measurable targets, which are regularly reviewed. However, the quality of teaching and learning is variable. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and achieve are not high enough. Pupils told me that work is not always challenging.
- Until recently, there have been limited opportunities for pupils to solve problems and develop their reasoning skills in mathematics. Although inspection evidence shows that pupils now have more opportunities to do so, you acknowledge that this is not embedded across year groups.
- Writing was an area for improvement at the previous inspection. A main focus of this inspection was to evaluate how effectively leaders are improving writing, including across the curriculum subjects. The progress made by pupils in writing was in the bottom 20% of schools nationally and in the bottom 10% in 2017. Pupils' attainment in writing at the end of Years 2 and 6 has been in the bottom 20% of schools for two years. Too few pupils achieve or exceed the standard expected for their age. The attainment of boys has lagged considerably behind that of the girls. Leaders and governors have, rightly, identified that improving outcomes in writing remains a main priority and work is underway to urgently address underperformance. Leaders' actions include covering topics and providing activities that appeal to boys in order to stimulate their interest, such as a visiting author. This has led to recent improvements in the quality of pupils' writing across year groups.
- There are now wider opportunities for pupils to edit and improve their written work. However, errors in English grammar, punctuation and spelling are not always addressed. As a result, pupils do not always correct their work accurately. The English leader acknowledges that pupils have limited opportunities to practise their writing skills in subjects other than English and religious education (RE). She has plans in place to ensure that pupils have more opportunities to write for different audiences and purposes across the curriculum but it is too early to judge the impact of these.
- Another focus of this inspection was to check whether appropriate support is provided for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders and governors understand how the money to support disadvantaged pupils is spent. However, they do not evaluate the impact of this funding to ensure that the money is spent wisely. You have begun to address this by providing more information to governors about the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. You have identified the potential barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. This information has been shared with staff so that they can better support these pupils' learning needs. School information shows that although the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is still below their peers, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils is beginning to improve.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress accelerates in writing, particularly for boys, so that more achieve or exceed the standard expected for their age
- expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high and work is challenging for all
- pupils have wider opportunities to write across the curriculum subjects and errors in English grammar, punctuation and spelling are addressed effectively
- the findings from the recent governance review are fully implemented in order to strengthen governance
- actions to improve the progress made by disadvantaged pupils are fully evaluated to judge their impact
- recent developments to enhance pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics are embedded across all year groups
- attendance improves so that it is at least in line with the national average.

I am copying this letter to the co-chairs 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 Calderdale. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christine Cook  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I made visits to all classes with you. I looked at the work in pupils' books with the English and mathematics leaders. I met with four governors, including the co-chairs of the governing body. I met with a representative from the local authority and held a telephone conversation with a School Improvement Partner. I also listened to four pupils read from Years 1 and 2.

I took account of the 17 responses from parents to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, and the 10 free-text comments. I also took account of the seven responses to the Ofsted staff survey. I talked to a number of parents as they dropped their children off at the start of the school day. I talked informally with pupils in lessons and during lunchtime. I met formally with pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6.

I scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation document, governing body minutes, records of the checks on teaching and learning, school

assessment information, attendance documentation and safeguarding documentation.