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18 June 2018

Mrs Monica McCarthy
St Vincent's Catholic Primary School
1 Pierrepont Road
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Dear Mrs McCarthy

Short inspection of St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 June 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 your school was judged to be good in July 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

The school's ethos, rooted in Christian values, is a strength that all members of the school community benefit from.

Your relatively new topic-based curriculum is now established and gives pupils across the school the chance to work independently and to study subjects in depth. Teachers have embraced the new curriculum and take an active part in introducing new topics, bringing learning to life and engaging pupils' individual interests. This is having an impact on pupils' reading, writing and numeracy throughout the school, although some Year 6 pupils, heard reading, showed gaps in their range of vocabulary.

Pupils, parents, carers and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Pupils told me that they feel safe and happy to such an extent that they do not want to leave. A parent told me how impressed they are with the school because teachers quickly get to know their children's characters and needs. The school gives priority to communication with parents, who receive regular updates on how their children are performing, as well as opportunities to comment directly on their classwork.

Leaders have been quick to address the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. Language and communication in Reception are now a strength of the school. Pupils are continually supported with their writing and progress is

seen in their books, around the classrooms and on display across the school. Phonics skills are practised and pupils are confident in using them to read unfamiliar words.

Half-termly assessment information ensures that the senior leadership team, middle leaders and adults working directly with pupils are aware of gaps in knowledge. Regular 'pupil progress meetings' help teachers to focus on any underachievement. The school's aim is that high-quality teaching meets the needs of all pupils, but recognises the need for directed support for particular pupils when gaps are identified.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records and policies are up to date and are managed well. Safeguarding training is timely and staff use the school's safeguarding policies and procedures appropriately and effectively. The school follows up any concerns over children and ensures that both pupils and families are supported.

The governing body supports and challenges the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements. Governors ensure that all staff are checked for their suitability to work with children and that the school keeps accurate records of these checks. The school routinely reflects on its safeguarding procedures and improvements are implemented quickly.

Inspection findings

- At our initial meeting, we agreed on two key lines of enquiry. The first of these focused on the progress of the most able pupils in writing at key stage 2. The school's self-evaluation had identified the progress of the most able writers as an area for development. Recent key stage 2 results had shown this group to be underperforming compared to their peers nationally. Additionally, recognising the importance of writing across the age ranges and in all subjects, we also looked at writing from a whole-school perspective.
- Children make a good start with writing in the early years. Staff ensure that children develop the physical skills needed to begin writing. Pupils quickly learn the rules that underpin the school's writing curriculum, including the use of cursive script in handwriting and a common school font for anything produced electronically by staff or pupils in the school. Leaders are aware that pupils need to use a more extensive vocabulary in their writing and have tackled this by promoting high-quality teaching and targeted intervention. The new curriculum is a further important element of the school's work to improve writing. The topics engage pupils' interests and give them a large measure of independence and choice in their writing. Pupils edit and improve their chosen pieces of writing and use their 'learning journals' to showcase their best work. This consistency of approach across the school demonstrates leaders' commitment to raising the profile of writing.
- Lesson observations, pupils' books and the school's assessment information

suggest that pupils, including the most able, are now making improved progress in writing.

- The second line of enquiry focused on the progress and attainment of the most able pupils in key stage 1. This was chosen because recent results had been below those found nationally and this had been identified by the school as an area requiring attention.
- A wide range of actions have been initiated by the school to boost pupils' progress in key stage 1. Leaders have worked to raise teachers' expectations of pupils and the pupils themselves have risen to the challenge. The new topic-based curriculum promotes pupils' numeracy and literacy skills well across a range of subjects. Pupils' writing is exhibited alongside that of other pupils throughout the school and they are proud to see their work displayed. For example, one display contained a cross-section of pupils' writing across all ages, which encouraged younger pupils to improve their writing. Building on their learning in the early years, pupils in key stage 1 use their knowledge of phonics well to read unfamiliar words. Outcomes in year 1 phonics continue to be strong.
- As a consequence of these actions, pupils are now well prepared for their entry into key stage 2.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school continues to give priority to improving the quality of most-able pupils' writing in key stage 2, so that outcomes are consistently in line with those in reading and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Jason Hughes
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and members of the governing body.
- The inspector held a discussion by telephone with the school's improvement adviser.
- The views of staff were taken into account through the 27 responses to Ofsted's

online questionnaire.

- The 144 responses to Parent View were also taken into account.
- Together with leaders, the inspector visited classrooms across the school.
- Pupils from Reception and Years 2 and 6 were heard reading.
- School documents, including policies and safeguarding records, the school's website and governors' minutes, were scrutinised.
- The inspector reviewed work in pupils' books and held discussions with pupils about their learning. There were 15 responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils.