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Mr Kieron Flood
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Flood

Short inspection of St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 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 the school was judged to be good in May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

St John the Baptist Primary School is a well organised, welcoming school. As you walk around the school, it is clear that leaders are providing pupils with a broad curriculum that enables pupils to enjoy many exciting activities. Displays of pupils' work are of a high quality and model high expectations.

Since the last inspection, a new leadership team has been appointed to the school. You have evaluated all aspects of the school's work and have accurately identified the school's strengths and weaknesses. You have detailed plans in place to support the improvements that need to be made, and you have acted quickly to address the below-average progress that pupils in Year 6 made last year from their previous Year 3 starting points. You have developed strong partnerships with schools within your academy trust and this has benefited all schools involved. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved and more pupils are making good progress.

Parents, carers and pupils said that they would recommend your school to others. Pupils are respectful of each other and listen carefully to the instructions that teachers and other adults provide. They move around the school calmly and support each other well in lessons. Pupils enjoy good relationships with staff members and feel well cared for. The vast majority of parents said that their children are happy at school. One parent stated that their child has 'grown and blossomed in confidence and academic ability.'

Following the school's last inspection, leaders were asked to improve pupils' achievement in writing. Since your appointment, you have put in place a range of approaches to ensure that the teaching of writing improves. You now provide pupils with high-quality texts that they use to gather ideas for their writing. Exciting activities are planned to motivate pupils to want to write. For example, a letter received by one class outlined plans to build a factory on the school field. This letter provoked pupils to discuss their opinions and produce writing of a high quality.

As a result of your work, standards in writing have improved. In Year 2 and Year 6 in 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching both the expected standards and higher standards in writing was similar to the national average. Further improvements have been made this year and, while the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standards remains similar to last year, a greater proportion of pupils are working at the higher standards in both key stages 1 and 2. Most pupils are making good progress. Pupils in Year 6 have made excellent progress in all subjects this year.

The last inspection found that pupils did not always present their written work to a high standard. Pupils did not get enough opportunities to practise their spelling, punctuation and grammar in a wide range of subjects. When we looked at books, we found that pupils now have more opportunities to write extended pieces of writing. You provide a broad curriculum for the pupils, and their books show that writing is linked to a range of different subjects. Pupils do have opportunities to apply their writing skills. However, too often, pupils make simple errors in their use of punctuation and grammar, which are not identified until their work is edited. The quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation in books is inconsistent. Improving this is an important next step.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including the designated safeguarding leader, maintain an intense focus on safeguarding. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding requirements are fit for purpose. Leaders are resolute in keeping pupils safe. They ensure that arrangements are up to date and that all legal safeguarding training is in place. Staff have a good understanding of the school's procedures. They are alert and listen to pupils. They act quickly to refer any concerns to the designated safeguarding leader who, in turn, is swift in ensuring that vulnerable pupils receive the support that they need.

The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent was just above the national average in 2017. Similar proportions of pupils have been persistently absent this year. Leaders have identified this and have begun to put in place more rigorous measures to ensure that attendance improves. Leaders and governors now check this carefully. Improving attendance has become a focus for the academy trust.

Pupils said that they feel safe in school. They know exactly what to do should they have any concerns and are confident that adults would resolve any issues that they have. Bullying is rare and any incident is followed up quickly. Pupils demonstrate a

good awareness of how to stay safe online. The school's curriculum provides a range of opportunities for pupils to find out how to stay safe. As a result, pupils are able to talk about how to stay safe in a range of different situations.

Inspection findings

- I wanted to find out whether leaders have acted effectively to improve pupils' outcomes in mathematics. Pupils' rates of progress in mathematics across key stage 2 have been below average in recent years and so not enough pupils have achieved the expected or higher standards by the end of Year 6. Leaders accurately identified that this is an issue and are already addressing it. Pupils in Year 6 have made excellent progress in mathematics this year, and pupils in other year groups are also achieving well.
- Resources are used well to help pupils to understand mathematical ideas. Pupils use these to justify their answers. The mathematics leader has provided staff training to develop the teaching of problem solving and reasoning. Training has also been provided for teaching assistants to enable them to use mathematical resources effectively. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils. They guide pupils well and encourage them to be independent in their learning. There is now more evidence of pupils developing their problem-solving and reasoning skills in pupils' books. Teachers plan tasks that meet the varying needs of all groups of pupils. However, sometimes, work is not well matched. Tasks for the most able pupils, for example, can lack challenge. Sometimes, they are too easy for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- During the inspection, I also wanted to find out how effectively leaders have acted to improve pupils' achievement in reading. This is because, in the last two years, pupils' progress in key stage 2 in reading has been below average. In 2017, pupils' attainment in reading was below average at the end of both key stages 1 and 2. Leaders have worked hard to bring about improvement. This includes putting in place a new approach to the teaching of reading comprehension. Leaders have formed good links with other schools to share ideas and to provide joint training for staff. Good teaching now ensures that lessons are well prepared. Furthermore, the use of high-quality texts provides pupils with a wealth of ideas to improve their writing. Inspection evidence shows an improved picture of achievement in reading this year. More pupils are on track to achieve the expected standards at the end of both key stages 1 and 2.
- In Year 2 in 2017, the achievement of boys lagged considerably behind that of girls in reading and writing. A well-below-average proportion of boys reached the expected standards in these subjects. Leaders have accurately identified this, and actions to improve the achievement of boys are already under way. In reading, leaders now choose texts carefully to ensure that pupils, including boys, enjoy reading. The profile of reading in school has been raised. Book fayres, book weeks and visits from authors and poets all motivate pupils to want to read more often. In writing, teachers consider the themes for writing carefully to suit the particular needs of the pupils in their class. The English leader has provided training for staff, and they now have a good knowledge of the national expectations for the pupils in reading and writing. Teachers and leaders regularly

check how well different groups of pupils are achieving. Inspection evidence shows that, in some year groups, the gap between boys and girls is narrowing, but more work is still needed to ensure that boys reach the expected standards.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation improves and that they use punctuation and grammar accurately in their work
- teachers plan mathematics lessons carefully so that work is well matched to the varying needs of all groups of pupils
- the achievement gap between boys and girls in reading and writing continues to diminish so that more boys reach the expected standards.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the director of education for the Diocese of Leeds (RC), the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wakefield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jaimie Holbrook
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met you and other senior leaders and shared my lines of enquiry. I also met with members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, a representative from the academy trust, the subject leaders for English and mathematics and the designated safeguarding leader. I considered the responses of 25 parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 24 free-text comments. We visited classes together in key stages 1 and 2. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, met with a group of them and looked at samples of pupils' work. I viewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluations of the school's current performance and its plans for further improvement. I considered a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information.