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Mrs Karen Wyatt
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Wyatt

Short inspection of St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 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 October 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Staff work together, share successful practice and check each other's marking, including with teachers from other schools in the deanery. Displays in early years celebrate the multicultural aspects of the school community. Pupils' topic work celebrates and showcases their writing skills.

Leaders have addressed inconsistencies in pupils' past performance. Through the work carried out with other schools, leaders ensure that pupils' progress is measured accurately. Leaders have introduced new policies, procedures and a consistent approach to checking pupils' starting points. This ensures that pupils' performance information can be relied upon. Year 3 pupils are quickly bridging gaps in their skills and knowledge and read age-appropriate text well. Leaders have plans in place to ensure that all pupils make appropriate progress throughout the school.

At lunch and breaktimes, pupils play together well and enjoy each other's company. Competitive games are encouraged by adults and transitions to lessons are managed well. A 'buddy system' helps to integrate newer pupils, and give responsibility to older pupils.

Parental involvement is encouraged, and is an important part of school life, especially in early years. Parents and carers are invited to take part in a number of activities with their children, including 'mystery reader', where parents read to groups of children.

You have effectively addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Leaders accurately assess the standard of teaching in the school, and use this to create meaningful targets for improvement. Teachers adhere consistently to the school's marking and feedback policy, where pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own learning. In reading, writing and mathematics, pupils review their progress against personal learning objectives.

Governors support and challenge the school. They have established a school improvement board, made up of leaders and governors, which meets regularly to review pupil progress and to challenge leaders. The renewed focus on pupil outcomes has given middle leaders additional opportunities to review pupil progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders manage safeguarding policies and procedures well, and use them to help keep pupils safe. Regular safeguarding meetings take place so that leaders can ensure that school practice is consistent, plan training and discuss any ongoing pupil concerns. When safeguarding concerns are raised, leaders make sure issues are dealt with quickly and appropriately so that pupils receive the support they need.

Governors provide challenge for the school's safeguarding activities. They make sure all staff have received appropriate training, that adults who work with pupils have had appropriate checks and that these are recorded carefully. Governors oversee safeguarding policies and procedures and ensure that they are up to date. Risk assessments are detailed, and take into account dangers associated with the school's inner city location.

Inspection findings

- At our initial meeting, we agreed on two lines of enquiry. The first centred on the outcomes for key stage 1. This was because, recently, this group performed below their peers nationally.
- Leaders have introduced new policies, procedures and checks on pupils' starting points to ensure that school data is robust and reliable. Progress seen in pupils' books indicates that standards are improved, compared with nationally age-related expected standards.
- Checks on the accuracy of pupils' progress undertaken alongside local schools ensure that performance information is reliable, and that helpful professional dialogue takes place. The school has access to a number of teachers who are skilled moderators, and use their knowledge to support internal review. Half-termly scrutiny of pupils' written work by middle leaders has identified areas of relative weakness. This information leads to catch-up work for individual pupils so that any gaps in knowledge and skills are quickly closed.
- The topic-based curriculum encompasses a range of subjects and ensures that pupils' learning is brought together in an extended piece of work. This gives all

learners regular opportunities to study the wider curriculum in detail.

- The second line of enquiry was to look at progress in phonics, especially for boys, as this group particularly had recently underperformed compared to their peers nationally. Leaders identified that outcomes in phonics are below nationally expected levels.
- Following a curriculum review, the school has raised the profile of teaching phonics. Children in the Reception Year confidently told me all about the 'ee' phoneme, and pointed it out in words displayed around the classroom.
- Additional booster sessions are in place across the school to support reading. The school has implemented regular pupil progress meetings so that gaps in understanding are quickly addressed. Reading journals are used to maintain strong communication between school and home. Teachers and parents use these well to track pupils' progress and encourage them to share information about the books they are reading.
- Groups of pupils in key stage 1, including boys, are making strong progress with their phonics. They are exposed to phonics early in their school career and have the necessary decoding skills to read age-appropriate words.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's continued emphasis on phonics leads to improved outcomes in the phonics screening check to be in line with the expected national standard.

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 Hammersmith and Fulham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jason Hughes
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and the chair of the governing body. I had a telephone conversation with the school's improvement adviser. I took into account the views of staff through the 17 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also took into account the 11 responses to Parent View. Together with you and your leaders, I visited classrooms across the school. I heard pupils from Years 2 and 3 read. I scrutinised school documents, including policies and safeguarding records, the school's website and governors' minutes. I reviewed work in pupils' books and held discussions with pupils about their learning. There were 35 responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils.