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Mr Richard Sanderson
Headteacher
St Osmund's Catholic Primary School, Salisbury
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Dear Mr Richard Sanderson

Short inspection of St Osmund's Catholic Primary School, Salisbury

Following my visit to the school on 2 October 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education at the school since the last inspection. Since that time, there have been a significant number of changes to the teaching staff. You, your deputy headteacher and governors have provided stability and strong strategic direction during this time. The improvements you have made to the quality of teaching have been sustained, and this has ensured continuous improvement to academic standards. As a result, the standards pupils achieve by the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have risen and are well above the national average.

Governors know the school and their responsibilities well. This well-informed and dedicated group have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, they provide effective challenge to leaders, making sure that improvement plans are clearly linked to better outcomes for pupils. For example, leaders have prioritised improving the quality of teaching of writing in the early years, which is now improving rapidly. The areas identified at the previous inspection have been a priority for leaders and governors. The leadership team's actions to improve teaching and assessment of phonics have been effective and the large majority of pupils now achieve the standard expected at the end of Year 1. You have rightly identified the need to develop middle leaders' roles so that they make sure that pupils continue to develop their skills as writers across the curriculum.

Leaders and governors are resolute in their determination to provide the highest quality of education, by raising achievement and by supporting pupils' personal development. The school's mission statement of, 'Love for God, love for each other,

love for learning' informs all leaders' actions and is understood and supported by pupils and staff. As a result, pupils behave well and they respond positively to each other and to adults. Pupils told me that 'people want to learn' at St Osmund's. They feel inspired to do their best and to excel in a range of subjects including science and religious education. They enjoy learning to play musical instruments in class and can take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as choral singing and sporting events. Pupils take on leadership roles including belonging to the school council and leading fundraising activities.

Almost all parents and carers agree that the school provides strong academic and pastoral support. They appreciate the inclusive community ethos and engaging teaching that the school provides. One parent, summing up the views of many, commented, 'I feel very lucky that my daughter is taught to such a high standard and nurtured in the environment of the school.'

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school and everyone is committed to the welfare of pupils in their care. Staff receive regular training to help them identify risks and to understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. Pupils feel safe in school and told me that they trust adults to listen to their concerns. They told me that bullying is extremely rare and they were confident that adults resolve issues very quickly.

You keep detailed records of concerns, and follow them up swiftly. You take resolute action if you are not satisfied with the response you receive from external agencies. You carefully review referrals from staff to make sure that pupils and families who need extra social and emotional support receive the help they need. This has had a very positive impact on pupils' welfare.

You make detailed checks to make that all adults working in the school are safe to work with children and these are carefully recorded. Governors check the school's systems carefully and review procedures so that they continually improve. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online. As a result of your work with families, pupils attend well and the number of pupils who regularly miss learning continues to decline.

Inspection findings

- To establish whether the school remained good, I investigated the teaching of

writing across key stage 2. This is because in recent years, pupils' rates of progress in writing have not matched the strong progress that pupils make in reading and mathematics.

- When we reviewed pupils' books, it was clear that pupils respond to inspiring stimuli for writing such as high-quality literature and are improving their written composition in their English lessons. They use imaginative vocabulary and some pupils are extending their range of punctuation and sentence structures to help them to reach the higher standard in Year 6. In some religious education and science books, pupils write at length to communicate their knowledge and understanding. This contributes well to the development of their written fluency and accuracy.
- However, the expectations of pupils' writing across all subjects and year groups is not high enough. The accuracy of pupils' written work is often of a higher standard in their English books than in other subjects. Writing tasks across subjects do not consistently challenge pupils to develop their composition or to apply their knowledge of punctuation and grammatical structures to a high enough standard.
- Across all subjects, inaccuracy of spelling limits the progress that some pupils make in writing. Some pupils show a weak understanding of common spelling patterns or misapply their phonics, for example they write, 'ememys' instead of 'enemies' and 'funder' instead of 'thunder'. Teachers do not address weaknesses in spelling consistently, for example there is strong practice in pupils' editing and improvement of their spelling in Year 6 but this is not evident in other year groups.
- I looked at how well the school supports lower attaining pupils in key stage 1 to make progress in reading. This was because, over time, too few lower-attaining pupils have caught up to the standard expected in reading by the end of Year 2.
- Lower-attaining pupils now make better progress in phonics, and assessment information shows that more pupils now achieve the expected standard in Year 1 or have caught up by the end of Year 2. This means that pupils are now able to tackle unfamiliar words when reading. You have made improvements to the quality of teaching by making sure that teachers plan questions to develop pupils' comprehension of their books. Your latest assessment information shows that more pupils in this group are now reaching the expected standard in reading comprehension by the end of Year 2. Pupils' current learning shows that a small number of low-ability readers require further support in developing their vocabulary and articulating their understanding of what they read.
- I also considered how the most able are challenged to reach the higher standard in writing across the early years and key stage 1. Assessment information shows that in recent years, no pupils have achieved the higher standard in writing by the end of Reception. In addition, too few have progressed to the higher standard by the end of Year 2.
- In the early years, children now are now supported to make better progress in writing. They learn how to form letters and to recognise the sounds that they make in adult-directed activities. When initiating their own learning, children have regular opportunities to make marks and write with purpose. We observed the most-able

pupils building words using their knowledge of letter sounds. These improvements are having a positive impact on children's progress in writing.

- In Years 1 and 2, teachers now plan tasks which require the most-able pupils to develop their skills as authors across different contexts. Pupils' writing shows their progress in forming more complex sentences and their increasing precision when using a range of punctuation. As a result, more pupils in Year 2 are now progressing towards the higher standard in writing.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils in key stage 2 develop the accuracy of their spelling and sustain a high standard of writing across the curriculum
- pupils with low prior attainment in reading at key stage 1 make good progress in their understanding of what they read.

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

Yours sincerely

Claire Mirams
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and your deputy headteacher. I met with your governors. I reviewed your plans for improvement, information on current pupils' progress and your own evaluation of teaching and the school's performance. We observed teaching and heard pupils read together. I spoke with parents at the end of the school day.

I met with a group of pupils and discussed their viewpoints on the curriculum, behaviour, bullying and keeping safe, including online. I scrutinised various safeguarding records and current information about school attendance. I spoke to a representative of Wiltshire local authority. I reviewed a range of current pupils' workbooks together with school leaders.

I also considered 44 parent responses to the online survey, Parent View, and 16 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.