

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mrs Brenda Schouller  
Executive Headteacher  
Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School  
Gladys Avenue  
Portsmouth  
Hampshire  
PO2 9AX

Dear Mrs Schouller

### **Short inspection of Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 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 December 2013.

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.**

The school has gone through an unsettled period since the last inspection, with several changes of staff, including in some senior roles. You joined the school in April 2016 as executive headteacher. The head of school joined in September 2017, bringing stability to the leadership. Frequent staff changes have contributed to some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and leadership and management over time. For example, provisional performance information indicates that the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in mathematics and writing by the end of key stage 1 in 2018 is below the national average. Teaching is not yet consistently strong across the school.

At the time of the previous inspection, inspectors highlighted many strengths of the school, including effective provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and the strong start that children have in Reception. These remain strengths of the school. Highly skilled teaching in the early years ensures that children use their early reading, writing and mathematics skills independently. Rich and varied activities linked to children's evolving interests and needs encourage them to make decisions and think for themselves. As a result, children make strong progress from their initial starting points, including the most able children. Leaders were asked also to strengthen the role of the middle leaders, and to improve the quality of teaching, especially in writing, and the provision for the most able pupils. The English and mathematics leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastically lead

their subjects well. However, you have not been as successful at improving pupils' writing and increasing the challenge for the most able pupils. Pupils' progress in writing is not fast enough and the most able pupils are not challenged effectively.

Pupils are keen to learn and take pride in their work. They say that their teachers are supportive and treat them fairly. They love making friends at Corpus Christi, including friendships across classes. Pupils enjoy many aspects of school life, such as reading and participating in the wide range of sports on offer, including golf, tennis and cricket.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. It has ensured that staff and volunteers are trained regularly. Policies and procedures are tight and day-to-day routines are secure. Staff are vigilant and swiftly report any welfare concern that they have, however small. Any necessary actions are completed without delay. The designated safeguarding lead works successfully with local agencies to ensure that the needs of pupils and their families are addressed effectively. Pre-employment checks to ensure the suitability of all adults who work or volunteer in the school are fully in place.

All the pupils who I spoke to said that they felt safe in school. Pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. They appreciate being able to talk to adults about their worries, and commented, 'If something is annoying you in your life, there is always someone to talk to.' Pupils told me that when there has been any bullying in the past, teachers always sorted it out. They explained that both the bully and the victim are supported well. As one parent typically commented, 'This is a lovely school which has a great feeling running through it.'

### **Inspection findings**

- At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed that we would focus on: how effective teaching is for the most able pupils; how well leaders ensure that pupils make strong progress in writing, particularly, but not solely, boys; and how effectively leaders and governors ensure that the school continues to improve.
- In recent years, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 and 2 has been below the national average. Current assessment information for 2018 indicates that, apart from at the end of early years, the most able pupils are not consistently stretched to meet the higher standards across the school. Leaders acknowledge that teaching does not reliably challenge the most able pupils well enough across the school. As a result, the most able pupils make slower progress and do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- In 2017, the progress boys made in writing by the end of key stage 2 was well below the national average. There has been some success in improving this picture. Leaders have redesigned the curriculum to ensure that topics and texts interest both genders. All the boys I spoke to said that they enjoyed their English lessons. I saw some strong progress in writing, particularly in Year 1. However,

the progress that pupils make in writing, over time, is not fast enough. Assessment in writing is not accurate and, as a result, the starting points of pupils are unclear. Currently, the gap in attainment between boys and girls in writing is too wide.

- Leaders and governors understand what needs to be done to bring about the necessary improvements because they know their school well. Middle leaders are fully involved in checking performance and moving their areas of responsibility forward. However, leaders are aware that the quality of teaching varies across the school. They are working to ensure that improvements to teaching are consistently established in all areas.
- Leaders have established a clear strategy to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Pupils are provided with a range of additional support to speed up their progress. However, this is only partially successful. Some disadvantaged pupils are not catching up quickly enough with others and the attainment gap remains wide. Leaders agreed that there is still further work to do to ensure that the progress of this group of pupils is consistently rapid in all year groups.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all groups of pupils make consistently strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly the most able pupils and those who are disadvantaged
- teaching and learning are improved by ensuring that tasks are challenging and that they build on pupils' previous learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Lea Hannam  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and the head of school to discuss the school's effectiveness. Together, we visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning, to talk to pupils and to look at their work. I heard some pupils read. Together with the leaders for English and mathematics, we looked at the quality of work in pupils' books. I considered 59 responses from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text comments. I also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day. Responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires were considered

and I had a meeting with a group of pupils to discuss their views about the school. I met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also had telephone conversations with representatives from the local authority and a representative from the diocese. In addition, I met with the leader responsible for early years. I evaluated the school's safeguarding arrangements. A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including: the school's self-evaluation; school improvement planning; attendance information; information about pupils' progress; and various policies. I also examined the school's website.