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12 December 2018

Mrs Joanne Procter
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Procter

Short inspection of Christ The King Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 December 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. On your appointment 15 months ago, you quickly identified a number of weaknesses in the school and immediately introduced a rigorous programme of change. You established a new leadership structure, reviewed and revised the deployment of staff and provided additional training where necessary. You were unrelenting in addressing underperformance. You invested in new resources, revised key policies and procedures and established a programme of refurbishment to provide a more attractive environment for learning. You are now developing an effective senior leadership team and providing more staff with middle leadership opportunities. In doing so, you have won the support and respect of parents, carers and staff. The parents who spoke to me, or responded to the online questionnaire, repeatedly praised your efforts and the 'fantastic', 'remarkable' and 'many changes for the better' for which you have been responsible. All the staff who completed the online survey said that they are proud to work at the school and that it is well led and managed.

The governors are knowledgeable and take their responsibilities seriously. They have reorganised their committee structure to ensure more effective sharing of information. They visit the school regularly and are closely involved in evaluating performance and in drawing up the school improvement plan. Crucially, they are using the school's considerable financial reserves for the benefit of current pupils.

The last inspection report asked leaders to ensure that parents are supported to

help their children at home and to take an active part in the life of the school. They were also asked to ensure that the school's improvement plans include clear ways of measuring success. You have been very successful in involving families in the life of the school. You have introduced a variety of methods of keeping in contact with them. These include the weekly newsletter, the half-termly report card on pupils' progress, the termly curriculum meetings and the online journal for parents of children in the early years. Parents are very positive about these developments. 'Communication is excellent' and 'the new head has introduced a whole new level of communication' were typical comments they made.

Your school improvement plan does include success criteria. However, these are not specific, so that it is not clear precisely how much improvement you expect your pupils to make, and what standards they should reach within defined periods of time. In writing, there is further work to be done to ensure that progress is strong and that the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards increases.

Pupils of all ages work with concentration in classrooms and behave well on the playground and around the school. They are polite and respectful, and relate well to each other, to adults and to visitors to the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Since your arrival at the school, you have introduced a range of measures to ensure pupils' safety. These include installing perimeter fencing and controlling access to the playground and the buildings. You have also established an emergency evacuation plan and implemented the recommendations of health and safety reviews. Fire practices are held regularly and pupils know precisely what to do and where to go in the case of a fire. There are appropriate systems in place to check on the suitability of adults to work with children. All staff and governors have received the necessary training in safeguarding. The staff I spoke to knew how to identify possible signs of abuse and what to do if they had any concerns about a child's welfare. You could account for the whereabouts of every child who was absent on the day of the inspection.

All the parents I met, and almost all who responded to Parent View, said that their children are safe at school. Every member of staff who completed the online survey agreed with this. All the pupils I spoke to said that they feel safe in school and on the way to and from school. They are taught how to keep themselves safe in a range of circumstances, including when using the internet and social media. They are very clear about what they should do if they encounter any unsuitable material. There is a small amount of bullying in the school but this is sorted out quickly and effectively. Pupils know which staff to go to if they have any worries or problems and know that they will receive any help they need.

Through your outreach worker, you provide support for families who need additional help and you work effectively with relevant external agencies. However, despite your best efforts, the local authority is not fulfilling its part in ensuring that the personal education plans for the children in its care, who are placed at your

school, are of the highest quality.

Inspection findings

- Pupils' results in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 were below average every year from 2015 to 2017. Last summer, they were above average. I wanted to know how this improvement had been achieved and whether it is being maintained. You explained that, in previous years, the teaching of phonics was not regular or systematic. You provided training for staff, arranged for them to visit schools with outstanding practice and made daily phonics sessions a requirement. In addition, you now check on pupils' progress every half term. Your results show that pupils currently in Year 1 are attaining at least the same as their counterparts this time last year. Therefore, the improvements are being sustained. You also showed me how boys' performance has improved to be in line with that of girls.
- A second area that I discussed with you was key stage 2 pupils' performance in science. This was below average in 2016 and 2017. Last summer, it was in line with the national average, although girls did less well than girls across the country. I wanted to know what you are doing to build on last year's improved performance. You explained that you and your staff have reviewed the science programme and drawn up an action plan for further development. You established an after-school club for science, which proved so popular that you have had to establish a second one. Pupils have attended science days at a local secondary school and scientists from an international firm have run sessions in the school. Among the presenters have been women scientists, who have helped raise girls' aspirations in this area. Your figures show that pupils currently in Year 6 are performing as well as their counterparts at this time last year. They also show that results for girls have improved.
- The pattern of progress in your school has been very variable across subjects and from one year to the next. I wanted to find out the reasons for this. You explained that an independent review, commissioned by the governors prior to your appointment, indicated that teacher assessment at the end of key stage 1 was inaccurate. As a result, published results were higher than they should have been. Therefore, the measures of pupils' progress from the end of key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2 are unreliable. Last summer, you recruited the help of local schools, including a teaching school, to check the results at the end of key stage 1, to ensure their accuracy. You have also arranged sessions where staff worked together on assessment, so that they could identify and iron out any differences in their judgements. As a result, you are now confident that assessment is accurate and that, in future, you will be able to identify precisely how well pupils progress during their time in the school.
- Attendance and behaviour have traditionally been strong features of the school. I was interested to know whether this is still the case. Attendance remains above average in the school. You interview and offer advice and help to the parents of any child whose rate of attendance is less than 95%. The success of this approach is reflected in the fact that, in the autumn term last year, you held 17 meetings with parents. This term, you have only had to hold one such meeting.

Last year, you identified that too many pupils were arriving late at school. To combat this, you introduced a system where the parents of any children who are late must sign them in and give a reason for the lateness. This has led to significant improvements. Your work with parents and pupils on revising the behaviour policy has also helped to ensure that behaviour continues to be a positive feature of your school.

- The final area that we discussed was the curriculum, which you are in the process of reviewing. You have a clear plan in place to ensure continuity and development across all subjects and you are making clear progress with this.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the rates of progress made by pupils and the proportions reaching the higher standards in national tests are at least in line with national averages
- the school improvement plan includes precise targets for pupils' progress and attainment, which can be used to check on the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Aelwyn Pugh
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I examined a range of documentation and discussed your self-evaluation with you, the deputy headteacher and senior leaders. I met six governors, including the chair and vice chair of the governing body, and spoke to the diocesan representative and your school improvement partner. Together with you or the deputy headteacher, I visited lessons to observe teaching and learning and to look at books. I also examined the single central record of staff. You and I discussed safeguarding arrangements and, with the help of a member of the senior leadership team, we examined records relating to behaviour and attendance. I met seven pupils, chosen at random from key stage 2, and spoke to staff and pupils as I walked around the school. I examined the 26 responses to the staff survey and the 132 responses to Parent View. In addition, I spoke to 14 parents and relatives as they brought their children to school.