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Mrs Louise Morton
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Morton

Short inspection of Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 January 2019, 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.

Holy Family Catholic Primary School is a vibrant, welcoming school. There is a strongly shared commitment, by you and your staff, to set high expectations for all pupils. These aims are fulfilled in pupils' work displayed around the school and in their books. You and your staff are passionate about raising academic achievement. You provide a supportive and caring environment that enables all pupils to flourish, regardless of their background. This starts from the time that the children enter the school's Reception class, through to the end of Year 6. They make rapid progress to achieve standards in line with, and often above, the national average.

You provide strong and effective leadership and have a clear vision for continued improvement. You and your senior leaders have steered the school successfully and made the improvements identified in the last inspection. You have an accurate view of the school and regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning. You know what the school needs to do next. The school improvement plan is clear and well focused.

Your staff are committed to helping you to improve the school further. They appreciate your support and feel that the school has continued to improve since the last inspection. Staff are proud to be part of this school and feel their contributions are valued. There is strong teamwork among the staff. Through your support and encouragement, they feel empowered to develop their roles in education. Staff

morale at this school is high. You and your team have developed strong links with the community, including the work you do in supporting vulnerable families.

Governors play a key role in supporting the work of the school. They are ambitious for the school to succeed. Governors speak passionately about the ethos of the school. They have attended a range of training. They are knowledgeable and well-equipped in a range of areas to support the school's work effectively. Governors ask relevant and searching questions at meetings and hold leaders to account for school performance. The minutes of governing body meetings demonstrate this challenge.

Holy Family School is a warm and welcoming place where pupils enjoy learning. The care of your pupils is at the heart of the culture that you have created. Pupils' positive behaviour is a strength; pupils show respect and get on well together. Pupils enjoy excellent relationships with staff. From the moment they start the school day, to the moment they leave for home, pupils are encouraged to try their best. Every parent or carer who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, would recommend your school to other families. One parent expressed the view that: 'The children are nurtured, valued, encouraged to learn and grow, and are cared for in a safe environment.' Another parent wrote: 'The school truly is a family in every sense of the word. Staff go that extra mile to deliver quality education to our children.'

Pupils I met during my visit told me that they enjoy coming to school to learn. They demonstrate an understanding of the principles around tolerance and respect for others. This is also evident in the excellent manners and respect shown by pupils throughout the day. They were courteous to all adults and to one another. They cooperated well in lessons and supported one another. Pupils I spoke to said what mattered was that everyone was treated with kindness.

Safeguarding is effective.

Keeping children safe is a priority at Holy Family School. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Training is up to date for all adults who work in the school. All staff are aware of the different types of abuse and signs to look for. As a result, they are vigilant and know what they need to do should they have any concerns about pupils or the conduct of adults. You have formed good partnerships with external agencies to offer pupils the support they need. You make appropriate checks to ensure that newly appointed staff are fit to work with children.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They know about road safety and about not giving out personal details to anyone online. Pupils also understand the different forms that bullying can take. They say that bullying very rarely happens, and if it does then adults deal with it swiftly. You teach pupils to stay safe through planned opportunities across the curriculum. You regularly invite the transport police into school to talk to pupils about staying safe in their local area. For example, a railway line near to school is a potential hazard.

Parents are very pleased with the school. They say that their children are safe and happy and enjoy coming to school. They also say that school staff are approachable and there is good communication. Any issues or concerns are dealt with promptly.

Inspection findings

- Following the last inspection, inspectors identified that teachers needed to improve attainment in reading and mathematics, particularly for the most able pupils. You have responded to this by introducing a new way of teaching mathematics throughout school. The leader for mathematics has worked alongside staff to deliver training, plan activities and provide useful advice. There is now more evidence of pupils using their skills to solve problems and reason about mathematics. Teachers use equipment effectively to help pupils to understand tricky mathematical concepts. They use questioning well to encourage pupils to develop reasoning and think about their answers, so that they have a deeper understanding of number. Evidence in books shows that pupils make good progress in mathematics and that the most able pupils are suitably challenged. As a result, outcomes show that the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards at the end of key stage 2 has been consistently above the national average for the past three years.
- In order to raise standards, you have changed the way that you teach phonics in school. As a result, standards have risen. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 is above the national average. You have also made changes to the teaching of reading, including the strong emphasis you place on vocabulary acquisition and the teaching of comprehension skills. This ensured that reading standards were above the national average at the end of Year 6 in 2018. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in reading at the end of key stage 2 was also above the national average.
- The development of pupils' speaking skills has also been a focus for the school. Following the last inspection, you were asked to ensure that pupils developed their skills as confident speakers. You have put in place a wide range of strategies to address this. Spoken English is of a high standard throughout the school. All adults model speaking effectively. Pupils are expected to answer questions in sentences. Teachers improve pupils' responses where necessary. You have included a wide range of opportunities for drama and performance. Pupils enjoy their learning and show high levels of engagement. They told me that they particularly like learning when they have opportunities to discuss their ideas with their peers. The pupils I spoke to during my visit were confidently able to express their ideas.
- Since the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in the school is higher than the national average, I investigated the quality of provision for these pupils in the school. The SEND coordinator is highly skilled and committed to her role. She has devised detailed provision maps which identify and provide effectively for the specific needs of targeted pupils. She prioritises the relationship with parents and carers in supporting pupils' additional needs. Staff receive regular training and support to help them to meet pupils'

needs. As a result, the majority of pupils make the progress they should. Parents who wrote to me or responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, praised the sensitive care and commitment that staff show towards their children. One parent wrote that he had received 'great support during the special educational needs assessment process, and the ongoing support is outstanding'.

- Leaders have a clear vision for the school's curriculum. The curriculum sets out to develop confident, well-rounded and happy learners. Enrichment is embedded across the curriculum to ensure that learning is meaningful for pupils. Evidence of work in books shows that pupils are given good opportunities to deepen their learning in subjects such as history and science. For example, pupils have good opportunities to develop their knowledge of science and use this to undertake scientific investigations. However, some subjects are less well developed. In these subjects, pupils do not get enough opportunities to fully develop their knowledge and apply the skills that they have learned. As a result, the quality of pupils' work varies across the curriculum. In some subjects, teachers' subject knowledge is not strong.
- Subject leaders are passionate about their subject areas. There are good plans to develop their subject areas further. The work of subject leaders in subjects other than English and mathematics is not fully developed. Subject leaders carry out checks on the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility; they look at books, visit classrooms, talk to pupils and check learning environments. This work is in the early stages of development and the quality of these checks varies across subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the work of subject leaders is further developed so that it has a greater impact on teaching, learning and assessment
- pupils are given further opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding of subjects across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Aleksandra Hartshorne
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you and your deputy headteacher and explained my lines of enquiry. I also met with members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, the subject leaders for history and art and the designated safeguarding leader. I also met with a group of pupils, a class teacher and a teaching assistant. I took account of the 52 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 36 free-text comments. There were five responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff and 36 responses from pupils to the pupil questionnaire. We visited classes together in Reception, key stage 1 and key stage 2. We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and I looked at samples of pupils' work. I viewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation 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 statutory requirements on the publication of specified information.