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Mrs Angela Phillips
Headteacher
Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Primary School
292 Harrogate Road
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Dear Mrs Phillips

Short inspection of Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 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 January 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have created a supportive and encouraging climate in which all staff are expected to play their part in improving the school further. This 'give it a try' attitude means that you do not rest on your laurels and there is no room for complacency. Consequently, the teaching of phonics, reading and early years provision are significant strengths of the school.

You and your team of senior and middle leaders work well together. Your middle leaders continue to develop and grow in confidence. They show a good grasp of their roles and use observations and reviews of pupils' work to gain an accurate view of how well pupils are doing. You provide regular opportunities for teachers to share ideas, plan and teach together. Teachers benefit from seeing other good practice both in your school and elsewhere. This is helping to continue to improve the quality of teaching over time, especially in mathematics.

You and your staff know your pupils extremely well. One parent spoke for many when describing the school as 'caring and always striving to improve'. Many parents commented on your visible presence on the school path at the start and end of the day. This helps parents raise any concerns they have. Pupils feel cared for and well looked after.

Governors have a clear and accurate view of the strengths and priorities for the school. They have good strategic oversight of what is happening, helped by some of them visiting the school on a regular basis to see the school in action. Your school

improvement plan clearly identifies those things that need further improving. However, there are times when your targets are unclear and imprecise. This makes it difficult for you and governors to accurately assess the impact leaders are having over time.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Keeping pupils safe and secure is at the heart of the safeguarding culture in your school. You have created an environment in which all staff are expected to be vigilant and responsible for keeping children safe. All staff have received helpful training on a wide range of safeguarding matters, including keeping pupils safe from terrorism and radicalisation, female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation. This, alongside regular up-to-date guidance, means that staff are not afraid to raise any concerns that they may have. This 'extra pair of eyes' reassures parents and pupils that they are safe and well cared for in the school.

Leaders carefully monitor attendance. They are quick to spot pupils who are absent and swiftly check with parents that pupils are safe. School leaders work well with a range of other agencies and professionals. As a result, pupils and their families receive help in a timely and effective manner.

The special educational needs coordinator has been instrumental in making sure that vulnerable pupils receive good-quality support. Staff take real care to capture the hopes and aspirations of children, which in turn leads to personalised support plans. The plans I sampled for a range of vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, contained clear and precise educational targets. Leaders use these well to check whether they and other professionals are improving the lives of these children and their families.

You and your governors take effective steps to check that staff are suitable to work with pupils in your school. Your record of these checks complies with legal requirements.

Inspection findings

- Leaders are determined that every child will learn to read and come to love reading. During phonics lessons, pupils show very good levels of concentration. Teaching is well matched to meet the different needs of pupils. You have made sure that through effective training and checking, all staff deliver the school's phonics programme in a consistent way.
- You rightly see the teaching of phonics as a stepping stone towards developing a passion for reading. You and your staff have worked hard to stock a range of age-appropriate books that pupils want to read. You also work hard with parents to ensure they too provide opportunities at home to read or listen to their children read. Consequently, pupils' progress in reading remains well above the national average.
- Children in Reception get off to a flying start due to highly effective and improved

provision, especially in the outdoor areas. The early years leader uses her wealth of experience to good effect, and staff work very well together. As a team, they skilfully capitalise on children's interests. During my visit, children were outside, bursting with excitement, searching for fairies and elves after a visit to Stockeld Park during the previous term. Staff used this well to develop children's language and mark-making skills, especially for boys. Children were keen to use chunky pencils and chalk to improve their fine motor skills. Early years staff have also worked hard to create good links with a wide range of different nurseries, helping children quickly settle into school life. Children achieve well and make a smooth transition into Year 1.

- Teachers in Year 1 have worked hard to accelerate the progress of those children, especially boys, who needed to improve their writing. A review of their exercise books shows the gains in learning they are making, especially in the way they form letters and in the accuracy of their writing.
- Over recent years pupils have not made good enough progress in mathematics. Leaders accept that there were several gaps in pupils' mathematical understanding. You and your leadership team, over the last 18 months, have radically overhauled the way mathematics is taught across the school. Pupils are now much more focused on problem-solving, reasoning and linking their learning across topics. Teachers really push for pupils to explain their thinking and do not simply accept the right answer. There is some early evidence that pupils' progress, including middle-ability and most-able pupils, is improving.
- Since the previous inspection, you have made sure that there are more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing across the wider curriculum. This is helping pupils to improve some aspects of their writing, including the use of capital letters, full stops and paragraphs. However, there are not enough regular opportunities for pupils to develop their subject-specific writing skills across a range of subjects, including history and geography.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils continue to improve their progress in mathematics
- pupils have more frequent opportunities to develop their subject-specific writing skills across the wider curriculum
- the school improvement plan clearly shows the timescales for when actions will occur and the intended impact they will have.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers. I met with a group of middle leaders, three governors and had a telephone conversation with a local authority officer. Together with you and your senior leaders, we visited classrooms to observe teaching and learning and to look at pupils' work. I listened to several pupils read. Consideration was given to the 165 free-text responses from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also considered the 240 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and the 29 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. I evaluated recent information in relation to pupils' progress, the school's own self-evaluation document, the school improvement plan and a range of documentation about how you keep pupils safe.