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Mrs Catherine Hunn
Headteacher
St Richard's Catholic Primary School
Cawley Road
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Dear Mrs Hunn

Short inspection of St Richard's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 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 March 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You lead the school with great determination and passion for your pupils and their families. Leaders show a deep knowledge of pupils and are totally committed to their success. Pupils' progress has improved as a result of well-chosen actions by leaders and governors.

With your governors, you have recently changed the school's class structure and leadership team due to the school growing in size. These well-researched plans have been introduced with care. As a result, the school is benefiting from strong leadership at all levels. Teachers appreciate the support and skill of their leaders.

Over the last three years, pupils' attainment has increased year on year, in both key stage 1 and key stage 2. At the end of 2018, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average both at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. However, pupils' progress has been below the national average in writing. You have rightly focused on this as a school priority, and pupils' written work shows greater depth. Pupils' high levels of engagement in lessons, their improved written work and the school's

own assessment information indicate that pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Governors, staff and pupils reflect your school's values and aims. Staff understand the part that they play in fostering a love of learning and teaching pupils to be independent. Parents are very supportive of the school and are happy with the quality of education that their children receive. They value the time you spend getting to know their children and they know that school staff will listen to their views. As one parent said: 'If you have a problem, you go and talk to someone and it will be sorted straight away.' Another said the school is, 'a nurturing environment with a vibrant sense of community'.

Pupils are happy at school and are clearly inspired by the curriculum. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 spoke with confidence about their history topic about The Great Fire of London. They were proud of their detailed and accurate knowledge, shown in their writing. When asked about their views on the school, one pupil replied that as their headteacher you are 'splendiferous'!

The impact of your work on building pupils' resilience is evident across the school. Pupils of all ages are keen to challenge themselves. They speak with excitement about things that they have found hard previously but can now do. They are articulate and use a wide range of vocabulary. From pupils' first days in school, staff encourage them to be individuals and express their own ideas. As a result, pupils show respect and tolerance for differences and are accepting of every child for who they are.

At the time of the previous inspection, inspectors recommended that you develop more-precise assessment in the early years. You have introduced an effective system which ensures that staff are aware of each child's achievement and of precise next steps. Staff tailor their questioning and feedback to children so that each child makes good progress from their own individual starting point. Also, following inspectors' recommendations, you have ensured that support staff across the school are well trained so that they have the knowledge and skills to move pupils on in their learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and staff at all levels are clear about their role in keeping children safe. Leaders and governors have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school's checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are thorough and detailed. Systems for recording these details are well managed and maintained. Governors carefully follow through any development points arising from visits to the school. You have ensured that all staff are confident through regular training and you engage effectively with other agencies to keep pupils safe.

Pupils feel safe at school as they know the many things that adults do to ensure their safety. They told me that there is no bullying at the school, but they have created anti-bullying posters, 'in case anyone feels bullied and then they will know

that we are there to support them'. Children work and play safely. On the playground, they behave well, sharing and negotiating during games. They talk with confidence about how to keep themselves safe online.

Inspection findings

- We agreed to consider: the role that all support staff are playing in ensuring the good progress of pupils; the success of leaders in sustaining improvement; and the progress of groups of pupils.
- The effectiveness of support staff was an area for improvement from the last inspection. Across the school, support staff are clear about pupils' needs and have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. They question pupils with care to check their understanding and clarify anything that they do not fully understand. In early years, support staff have detailed knowledge of phonics, which they use to support children well in the early stages of learning to read and write. Staff encourage children to talk about their play, which helps them to acquire language skills swiftly.
- You have accurately assessed the areas for improvement across the school. Leaders at all levels, and particularly the assistant headteacher, are supporting you to ensure that pupils make strong progress. I could see the success of this work in the pupils' ability to articulate their learning. Pupils' written work in a range of subjects reflects recent improvements in teaching and higher expectations of all staff. The work of the phase leaders has been key in ensuring that these developments are effective. Staff new to the school are supported well to take on school practice. Useful training for all staff has resulted in consistent expectation and practice right across the school. I saw evidence of the impact of leadership on the achievement of pupils during visits to classes in all year groups and when considering pupils' written work. A few governors are new to their roles within the redesigned governing body structure. They are quickly developing their skills to challenge leaders at all levels so that they are held to account.
- Leaders have created a curriculum which is carefully structured to help pupils build a broad and rich vocabulary and sound knowledge. Pupils produce high-quality art work, perform well in choirs and learn to play competitive sports with the specialist support of physical education coaches. The breadth of your curriculum particularly benefits pupils who find writing harder, as they can write about their experiences and individual interests. Pupils' willingness to reflect on their work and identify personal targets means that pupils are clear about their goals. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) show resilience and tenacity when trying to improve their work, for example during writing in Years 1 and 2, problem-solving in mathematics in Years 3 and 4, or building a slope for cars to run down in the early years garden.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well compared to the national average for this group. The priority that you have placed on building pupils' spoken language skills as soon as they enter your school helps pupils express their ideas well. This, in turn, has aided progress in writing. Pupils of all abilities challenge themselves to use complex sentence structures and use words

carefully chosen for their effect.

- Disadvantaged pupils are now making stronger progress, as I saw in their work. You are correctly aiming to increase the progress made by disadvantaged pupils with SEND as previously this group has made less progress than other groups.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- embed recently introduced strategies to strengthen pupils' progress further
- continue the planned development of the governing body so that governors new to their roles can offer increasingly robust challenge and support.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda Appleby
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and other leaders, including the assistant headteacher, to discuss various aspects of the school's work. We spoke about changes to the school and improvements since the last inspection. I also met with members of the governing body, including the chair. I spoke to a representative of the local authority by telephone. I observed learning in several lessons, together with you or the assistant headteacher. I spoke to leaders and a group of teachers and met with a group of pupils drawn from Years 2 to 6. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including at playtime. I considered 38 responses to the staff survey and 71 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as speaking to several parents at the beginning of the day. I considered a range of documentary evidence, including the school's self-evaluation documents, school improvement plans and documents relating to safeguarding.