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Mrs Gillian Hood  
Headteacher  
St Gildas' Catholic Junior School  
Oakington Way  
London  
N8 9EP

Dear Mrs Hood

### **Short inspection of St Gildas' Catholic Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 27 February 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. You and your team share a good understanding of how children learn well.

There have been improvements in some areas since the last inspection. Pupils now reach higher standards in writing. Senior and middle leaders work together effectively and check on pupils' progress on a regular basis. While there have been improvements in writing and mathematics, pupils' progress in reading at the end of key stage 2 declined in 2018.

The school believes in valuing the needs of individuals and welcomes contributions from the local community, both of which are very evident in its work. Overall, parents and carers are very positive about the school. Many parents told me that their children benefit from the school's good-quality care and teaching. There is a strong sense of belonging among pupils, staff, families and governors. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their enjoyment of learning. They collaborate well and treat each other and adults with great respect.

#### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders, including governors, set high standards to ensure that all children are safe. This responsibility is shared by all staff. Governors also receive safeguarding training. Topics covered this year include: female genital mutilation and preventing radicalisation. Staff know how to safeguard children and demonstrate that they know how to put their

training into practice. Leaders implement a robust recruitment process that includes systematic checks on staff, which are recorded on the single central register.

The school works closely with external agencies. Referrals are made promptly, and records show that there is a rigorous approach to each case. In my discussions with pupils, it was clear that they feel safe in school and learn about how to stay safe, including when using technology. Younger pupils value having an older pupil as their buddy. Parents and carers confirm that they feel that their children are kept safe at school.

## **Inspection findings**

- We agreed for the first line of enquiry that I would consider how effective the school's work is in the teaching of reading at key stage 2, particularly for boys and those who are disadvantaged. This is because pupils' progress in reading has been below that in writing in recent years.
- Governors and leaders shared with me their vision to develop all pupils' reading skills. Leaders have introduced a new approach to teaching reading in the last two years. This has impacted positively on pupils' confidence with reading and their overall understanding of different layers of meaning.
- In lessons we visited, pupils enjoyed reading. Girls and boys, including those who are disadvantaged, had a good understanding of the features of a text. From Year 3, pupils develop their ability to evaluate what they have read. Pupils in Year 4 and above use their inference skills well. They can give their opinions and views about a text. Pupils respond well to the challenges presented in their reading lessons and show their ability to give detailed evaluations. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, read challenging texts and enthusiastically discuss their reading, for example their understanding of the characters and their different roles. The children I heard read showed their ability to read with expression and to use their prior learning to confidently decode unknown words.
- Work in pupils' English books shows that they write well, following their reading of different texts. Pupils are also able to accurately summarise what they have read. However, in a few cases, their reading comprehension work needs to be further developed. During the inspection, each year group worked with external actors on a Shakespearian play. Pupils were inspired by this and we saw them practising their reading and writing skills to good effect in follow-up lessons.
- My second line of enquiry explored how the broader curriculum supports the development of basic skills, particularly for those who are disadvantaged. Leaders have revised the curriculum, including a focus on how pupils develop their literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills across all subjects.
- Pupils spoke positively about their learning in different subjects. Work seen in a range of books showed that all groups of pupils are helped to write at the expected standard and in greater depth. In science, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, practise their reading skills through carrying out their research. Pupils develop their mathematics skills to a good standard in science and history, for example analysing data from graphs.

- Pupils take pride in their work and present it well. They develop their writing skills well, particularly at greater depth. We saw pupils using their speaking skills to debate a popular British current affairs topic. The reading activity that followed enhanced their learning further. Pupils, staff and parents are very proud of the 'floor books' introduced this year, which contain visual and written records of their learning in the foundation subjects. They capture and reflect the ways in which all pupils develop their cultural understanding in and beyond the classroom. Pupils develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills through these learning experiences. They were able to recall and talk about their prior learning well.
- Finally, I explored how well leaders manage attendance and ensure that pupils enjoy school. This was because of some variability over time in the absence of different groups of pupils. For example, in 2018 the persistent absence of girls was above the national average.
- Leaders track attendance consistently. There are clear procedures in place that are implemented if a pupil's attendance falls below expectations. The school works closely with external agencies, which work effectively with families. Visits to families form an important part of this work. You and your senior leaders provide individual support to families to ensure that pupils attend school every day. Any pupils who have anxieties are very well supported in nurture groups, which are planned to meet the specific needs of the group. Overall this year, there has been an improvement in attendance for different groups of pupils, for example girls and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils enjoy school. During the inspection, I saw pupils working well together and supporting each other with their learning. Pupils play well together in the playground, and they happily spoke to me about how they enjoy working together in lessons. During my conversations with pupils, they spoke about their friendships and how much they value their teachers, who always support them. Pupils were in full agreement when a pupil said, 'Everyone is there for each other.' They also agreed with another pupil's comment, that, 'If someone is struggling with their work they don't get left behind. Everyone is included.'

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the revised curriculum is fully implemented and impacts strongly on all aspects of pupils' learning
- approaches to further improve standards in reading are implemented across the school so that pupils' progress in reading continues to improve.

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

Yours sincerely

Janice Howkins  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, your deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, five middle leaders, one member of support staff, the co-chairs of the governing body and a parent governor. I made joint visits to lessons with you and your deputy headteacher. I held discussions with groups of pupils, as well as talking to parents in the playground. I took account of 105 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. A range of the school's documentation was considered, including information about pupils' achievement; the school improvement plan; and the school's self-evaluation. I reviewed safeguarding policies and procedures, including information about attendance and exclusions.