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Mr James Broadbridge
Headteacher
St Dominic Savio Catholic Primary School
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Dear Mr Broadbridge

Short inspection of St Dominic Savio Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 2 May 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 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 have successfully built a cohesive leadership team which is fully committed to your research-based approach to school improvement. Leaders at all levels hold recognised positions of expertise, including in phonics, religious education, writing and special educational needs. Through this, they share their knowledge and understanding, both within school and across other schools, particularly within the diocese cluster of schools and the local authority.

Middle leaders share senior leaders' passion for improvement. Middle leaders lead strongly through example and a secure knowledge of how to ensure progress in their subject for all pupils. They monitor the progress that pupils are making in all subjects and coach teachers to help ensure that all pupils continue to make strong progress.

The regular checks that senior leaders carry out on pupils' progress have ensured that all groups make very strong progress from their different starting points. This includes the large number of pupils on roll who speak English as an additional language, as well as pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

or who are disadvantaged.

Your determination to provide the best for every pupil is palpable. Parents and carers are almost unanimous in their view that their children are well taught. One comment, typical of the views of many parents, was: 'The school has a very caring atmosphere: each individual pupil is well known both personally and academically, and in our experience, learning is highly personalised.' Staff who responded to the online survey are unanimously proud to work at the school and feel that leaders 'genuinely care' about their well-being.

Pupils' attainment in phonics is strong over time. The proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check and the Year 2 check is consistently above the national average. Pupils' attainment in key stage 1 is also strong. In 2017 and 2018, attainment of pupils at the expected standard and at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics was above that seen nationally.

Pupils continue to make good overall progress across key stage 2, making progress well above the national average in reading and mathematics. Consequently, in 2017 and 2018, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected and the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 was above the national average.

Work in pupils' books shows that current pupils continue to make strong progress across the school, meeting the very high standards that teachers set. Work in subjects other than English show the same high writing standards in presentation and attention to spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Leaders are in the process of redesigning the curriculum, planning it carefully to ensure that pupils' skills and knowledge are built progressively over time. Assessment systems have also been developed to enable teachers to identify what pupils know and can do so that they can build on this learning. Some subjects have already changed to this knowledge-based curriculum, particularly science and religious education, with others planned to change at the start of the next academic year. Senior leaders recognise the importance of ensuring that progress in each subject, across time, is carefully monitored while these changes take place.

Areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. You have introduced a new feedback policy aimed at helping pupils to make strong progress while conscientiously managing teacher workload. Provision in the Reception classes, both indoors and outdoors, has been improved and now contributes well to children improving their reading, writing and number skills.

Governors are committed to the values and ethos of the school. Governors know the school well and are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They provide a good level of challenge and support for leaders.

The local authority provides effective support and training, which contribute well to school improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. In your role as designated safeguarding lead, you monitor policy and procedures regularly and ensure that practice meets current requirements. All records are detailed, regularly updated and kept securely. The investment in an online system has increased communication between all key adults and your safeguarding team. It allows the team to look for patterns and identify whether a child is vulnerable and may benefit from time in the nurture facility you have set up. You regularly refresh staff training to ensure that they are knowledgeable about the signs of abuse.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Pupils enjoy opportunities to work in partnership with other pupils. They are considerate of the views of others and listen with interest. Pupils were respectful towards each other and adults, while being extremely confident and articulate. During a conversation I held with a group of pupils, they were clear about the difference between falling out and bullying, and they were also adamant that there was not any bullying in school. They have confidence in the staff and peer mediators to resolve any issues. Pupils are given good guidance on how to keep themselves safe through a structured curriculum that includes information about cyber safety and knowing how to seek help. The many responses on Parent View confirmed that almost all parents feel that their children are safe in school and would recommend the school to another family.

Inspection findings

- The first key line of enquiry that we agreed to look at was the strength of teaching, learning and assessment in all subject areas across the school.
- Knowledge, skills and understanding in all curriculum areas are of a very high standard, for example in projects from the science fair, artwork in Year 6 and design work in Year 4. Pupils say they enjoy their learning and that lessons are fun. Learning behaviour in all lessons is exemplary.
- Leaders have designed the physical education curriculum to be fully inclusive and pupils enjoy a vast range of sporting activities that include lacrosse, Gaelic football and ballroom dance. As a result of consulting pupils, in particular older girls who disliked physical education, the school introduced cheerleading, and many pupils now continue to enjoy success both in and out of school in this discipline.
- Next, we looked at pupil premium funding. In particular, we looked at how governors hold leaders to account for its effective use and the impact it has on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders, including governors, carefully monitor the use of the pupil premium funding to ensure that it is being effectively used. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make particularly strong progress which is at least in line with that of their

peers and stronger than the national average.

- Finally, we looked at provision in the early years setting and the impact that improvements have had on children's and pupils' progress.
- Children enter the early years provision from many different nurseries. Assessments carried out on entry show that a significant proportion, around one third, have below expected levels in reading and writing. In addition, around one quarter enter below expected levels in mathematics. In 2018, children made strong progress and the number leaving the early years with a good level of development continued to be above the national average.
- You have ensured that there has been specific training in phonics teaching for all members of staff. A large number of support staff work alongside teachers from the Reception Year and Year 1 to deliver phonics teaching to 11 different ability groups. This is overseen by the specialist leader of education in phonics, who models exemplary practice to enhance teaching and learning. Consequently, the strong outcomes in the Year 1 and Year 2 phonics screening checks have been sustained and pupils in the early years have a strong understanding of phonics to ensure that they make rapid gains on entry to key stage 1.
- Parents have many opportunities to be involved in their child's learning in the early years, for example through contributing to the online learning journal or through weekly reading sessions offered to all parents.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's new curriculum continues to evolve and become embedded so that rates of strong progress and high standards are maintained across all subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Marcia Goodwin
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your assistant headteachers, senior and middle leaders, governors and the school improvement adviser from the local authority. We visited classrooms together to assess the progress being made by pupils. We looked at pupils' workbooks and talked with pupils in lessons. I held a discussion with a group of pupils.

I looked at a range of documentary evidence, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and its plans for improvement. I also scrutinised various documents related to safeguarding, including the single central record and examples of referrals made to an external agency. We also assessed current rates of attendance for specific groups of pupils. I gathered views from parents and took account of the 98 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 62 free-text responses. I also took account of the 119 responses to the pupil survey and the 23 responses to the staff survey.