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Mrs Sarah Wall  
Headteacher  
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Hampshire  
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Dear Mrs Wall

### **Short inspection of St Jude's Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 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 July 2015.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. With the support of your senior leaders and staff, you have continued to build on the strengths recognised at the previous inspection. You constantly seek ways to further improve the school. As an example, you are working to enhance the curriculum by the adding more opportunities for pupils to become involved in community events and visit local places of interest. The development of the forest school has also been a great success, enabling pupils to learn more about the environment. You are also quick to address any underperformance and have acted swiftly to reverse last year's dip in pupils' progress in writing.

Pupils at the school are very polite. On inspection, I was greeted by a pupil who welcomed me, shook my hand and introduced himself, before engaging in conversation about how much he loves the school. Pupils say that they enjoy learning and that their teachers are friendly, fun and teach interesting lessons. There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere within the school and pupils settle quickly to work and listen respectfully to adults and other pupils.

You have addressed the recommendation from the last inspection to improve the expertise in mathematical reasoning skills of all teachers. Both the leadership and teaching of mathematics are now strong. Pupils are given many opportunities to solve problems and use their reasoning skills during lessons. Mathematical apparatus is used effectively, and the most able pupils are challenged appropriately. Skilful questioning and insistence on the correct use of mathematical vocabulary have contributed to the improvements in the teaching of mathematics and progress

made by pupils.

The last inspection also asked you to improve pupils' attendance. A change in policy and the implementation of new practices have had a positive impact on attendance. For example, you have introduced awards for good attendance and have established a parents' forum, where the importance of good attendance is discussed. As a result, overall attendance this year is now at least in line with the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has increased significantly and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced.

There have been many recent changes to the governing body. Some governors are currently undertaking training to enable them to fulfil their roles more effectively. However, governors provide leaders with effective challenge, especially regarding the progress made by pupils and rates of attendance. Governors are aware of the school's priorities for improvement. Plans are in place to increase the number of governors' visits during the school day.

Staff are highly supportive of leaders and appreciate the many opportunities they have for professional development. Every member of staff who responded to Ofsted's survey said they are proud to work at the school. They also said that leaders ensure that staff's work-life balance is considered when making changes.

Nearly all parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said that they would recommend the school to others. One parent, reflecting the views of many, commented: 'My children are extremely happy to go to St Jude's. They are always happy to go to school. If concerns are raised, they are taken seriously and resolved appropriately. All staff at St Jude's are dedicated, professional and always have the children's best interests at heart.'

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that the safety and welfare of pupils and staff have high priority. Leaders maintain extensive records of concerns electronically. This enables the designated safeguarding lead to build a picture of any emerging issues and investigate them further. The safeguarding governor regularly visits the school to check that policies and procedures are in place and adhered to. Staff and governors receive regular safeguarding training. They know what to do should they have concerns about pupils' well-being.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school and know who to talk to if they have any concerns or worries. Parents agree that their children are safe and feel safe in school. Pupils learn how to stay safe in a range of situations, including when on the road and when using the internet or a mobile phone.

## Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look at specific areas of the school's provision: the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements; the teaching of writing; the progress of disadvantaged pupils; the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); and the breadth and balance of the curriculum.
- The amount of progress that pupils make in their writing, from the end of key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2, has decreased for the past two years. In 2018, it was significantly below that made by pupils nationally. With the support of senior leaders, you have investigated why this has happened. As a result, you have introduced changes to the ways that teaching and pupils' work are monitored and evaluated. You identified that many pupils at your school have had little experience of the outside world. This limits the experience they can draw on when writing and their choice of vocabulary. In response to this, you have introduced more trips and visits to places of interest, giving pupils more first-hand experience. In addition, high-quality texts are used as class readers in each year and you now insist that, while in school, pupils only read from books that are appropriate to their reading ability. These changes have enabled pupils to increase their vocabulary and develop their writing skills. Pupils' work in books and on display around the school confirms that most are now making strong progress in their writing. Leaders are aware, however, that these new practices and strategies need more time to become fully embedded across the school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at the school, although increasing, is below the national average. These pupils are carefully supported both emotionally and academically. Work in their books and the school's own progress information show that disadvantaged pupils currently at the school are making strong progress. Indeed, many disadvantaged pupils are now making stronger progress than other pupils. As a result, the difference in progress made between disadvantaged pupils at the school and other pupils nationally is close to being eradicated.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND in the school has recently increased sharply. All pupils with SEND are well catered for. Their individual needs are quickly identified, and appropriate programmes are put in place to support them. These programmes are closely monitored, evaluated and altered if they are not having the desired impact on each pupil's progress. The school's current progress information and work in books show that these pupils are making very good progress from their various starting points. Good relationships between the school and outside agencies, who readily provide additional, effective support, ensure that the needs of this group of pupils are met effectively.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. There is evidence in the displays of pupils' work, work in books and visits to classrooms that the foundation subjects, such as history, music and art, are fully covered. Pupils say that they enjoy learning through topic. A group of pupils spoke to me at length about the work they are doing on the Second World War and were excited about their planned 'evacuation day'. Many links are made between subjects and these are enhanced by first-hand experiences through visits to places of interest, such as Portchester

Castle or Selbourne. You regularly review and update your curriculum and are currently developing a more robust system for identifying pupils who have not grasped key concepts within their topic work.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvements made to the teaching of writing are embedded, enabling pupils to sustain the strong progress that they have made this year.

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

Yours sincerely

Brian Macdonald  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and your senior leadership team to discuss the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement. You and I visited every class to observe pupils learning, talk to them and look at their work. We also looked at the quality of work in pupils' books. I met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body, and also met with middle leaders. I had a meeting with a representative of the local authority.

I considered the school's documentation relating to safeguarding, governance, pupils' progress and attainment. During breaktime, I spoke informally to pupils to gather their views of the school. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. I took account of the views of parents by analysing 51 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 50 free-text comments. I also considered 17 responses to the staff survey.