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Mrs Kate Baptiste
Headteacher
St Monica's RC Primary School
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Dear Mrs Baptiste

Short inspection of St Monica's RC Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 June 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. You have developed a capable team of senior and middle leaders. Together, you have had a significant impact on raising standards since the previous inspection. Leaders have a detailed knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the school's work. This means that you are able to work effectively as a team to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders ensure that teachers receive the training and guidance needed to teach effective lessons. This had led to strong practice in the classroom and supported your continuing drive for consistency. Parents and carers are positive about the way you have led the school. One comment, typical of others, was that you 'know every child by name and promote a positive learning environment'.

The school has a welcoming atmosphere and the pupils are polite and courteous. They show respect to adults and each other and are keen to learn. They participate fully in lessons. Pupils understand why education is important and value the way teachers make the learning interesting and engaging. This is especially the case in science, geography and physical education. They enjoy sports and music. Many have learned an instrument and relish the opportunities they get to play live in front of an audience at different school events.

You are supported by a team of skilled governors who share your clear vision for the school. They work closely with you to identify priorities and evaluate progress. They have a sharp focus on school development and use their visits to the school to become better informed about the school's work in these development areas. There have been several changes to the governing body this academic year and governors are adjusting to their new roles effectively.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and securely stored. Staff have a good understanding of current safeguarding guidance and procedures, and their training is up to date. They are clear on how to report concerns and are confident in doing so when necessary. Pre-employment checks on adults working at the school meet statutory requirements.

Governors carry out appropriate checks on safeguarding during the school year. The curriculum is well planned to help pupils understand how to stay safe. Pupils report that they feel safe at school, and parents support this view. Pupils have a secure understanding of issues such as road safety and stranger danger. They were able to explain clearly what they had learned from recent lessons about online safety and would not hesitate to inform an adult if they were worried. Partnerships with local agencies are strong and help to safeguard pupils.

Inspection findings

- The first key line of enquiry focused on what the school has done to increase the progress that pupils make in writing by the end of Year 6. This was because the school had identified that progress in reading and mathematics was stronger than that in writing in 2018.
- The school has implemented a plan that sets out the skills that all pupils must be taught in order to improve their writing. These give pupils the foundations they need to write well in different genres. Most pupils can describe these 'non negotiables' and can explain how they use them routinely in their writing across all curriculum areas. These are designed to bring consistency across the school which, with some minor variations, they do.
- In lessons observed, pupils demonstrated good note-taking and research skills and used these well to think about and understand what should go into an effective piece of writing. They also used talk well to shape their writing. Recent work on debating has honed pupils' skills in being concise and focused; this has, in turn, improved their non-fiction writing.
- Pupils are also skilled at editing and redrafting their writing to improve the final piece and produce a polished outcome. They use teachers' feedback efficiently and know how and why they make the stylistic choices that they do. They transfer these skills into their writing in science, the humanities and religious education, writing with enthusiasm and enjoyment about a range of subjects.
- The second key line of enquiry focused on how well the school uses the pupil premium grant to support disadvantaged pupils; and how well the governing body holds the school to account in this area. This was because in 2018 disadvantaged pupils did less well than their peers at the end of key stage 2.
- Governors regularly review the way the funding is spent and monitor its impact to ensure that it continues to be used effectively. They are aware of their duties to monitor the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils. While recognising that these pupils may face additional barriers to learning, they are clear that the

expectations for disadvantaged pupils should be as high as for others.

- Support for disadvantaged pupils is well targeted and has an impact. In addition to the academic support that is in place for this group, leaders have ensured that pastoral input is of a high quality. The school uses a nurturing approach to support the most vulnerable pupils. Consequently, these pupils' behaviour and attitudes are strongly improving. Pupils are ready to learn and their self-esteem is bolstered.
- Outcomes in most pupils' books show that there are high expectations and equality of opportunity for all pupils. Disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress from their starting points. As yet, their attainment remains below that of their peers. The school is aware of this and continues to adapt interventions and provide enrichment opportunities to close this gap.
- The third key line of enquiry focused on middle leaders and the development of their roles in driving improvements in teaching and learning. This was an area for improvement at the time of the previous inspection.
- Leaders at all levels are clear about their vision for improvement. They work together well and understand how their contribution links to other curriculum areas to have the maximum impact. As a result of this approach, links have been forged between English, mathematics, science and religious education; pupils' books show the benefits of this in the strong progress that they make.
- Leaders evaluate the impact of their work on pupils' progress in their subjects and use this knowledge to adapt and refine their approach when necessary. They monitor the quality of teaching and hold staff to account for pupils' progress. They use assessment well to target underperformance and act swiftly to address it.
- Middle leaders are skilled in their collaboration, both in school and with other local schools, offering support and advice when requested. They also use opportunities to network wisely to find and bring new initiatives to the school. This has led, for example, to changes in the way they gather evidence for moderation in English and to changes in the teaching and learning of mathematics; these are well considered and already improving outcomes for pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to narrow the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers by the end of key stage 2, supporting them to meet expected standards and exceed them where possible.

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 Enfield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Karen Matthews
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held meetings with you, and with senior and middle leaders. I met with four governors and your school improvement adviser. I met with pupils from a number of year groups. I visited classrooms across key stage 2 with senior leaders to gather evidence about the key lines of enquiry and to look at pupils' work. We considered documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, and documents relating to safeguarding. I also looked at information on the school's website. I analysed the confidential responses to the online inspection surveys from 14 members of staff and 232 pupils. I also took into account the views of 138 parents who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 134 free-text responses.