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Mrs Nicola Duggan
Headteacher
St Michael and St Martin Catholic Primary School
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Dear Mrs Duggan

Short inspection of St Michael and St Martin Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 18 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 June 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 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 very high expectations of pupils and adults at the school. This is reflected in the school's ethos, which is firmly based on Christian values. All members of the school community recognise the dignity of every person and strive for excellence in all aspects of education. Recent academic outcomes have been very strong across key stages 1 and 2.

Regular pupil progress meetings underpin your relentless pursuit for school improvement. Leaders use these meetings to identify academic and pastoral support for individual pupils. For example, you quickly capture concerns about pupils' progress and attainment and cross-reference this information with their attendance.

Leaders, including governors, are aware of the need to ensure strong progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, you have committed significant resources to support these pupils. For example, all pupils meet their support and therapy targets, and review meetings reflect this.

Pupils make strong progress and enjoy their learning. Year 6 pupils demonstrated

this when they were observed completing a yearbook based on their experiences at the school. The activity captured their imagination, and pupils responded well to the challenge. Pupils' information and technology skills enable them to access their learning, because they have a strong understanding of how to produce computer-based presentations.

Leaders continually seek to improve the curriculum offer. Recently, they reviewed the science curriculum. They found that books showed too much reliance on theoretical lessons and that pupils needed to complete more practical experiments. They discovered that teachers were not routinely confident in teaching science. As a result, leaders introduced new initiatives. Teachers now access online training to improve their science subject knowledge, and leaders check teachers' planning to validate the science content. Weekly plans include assessment opportunities. This helps teachers and leaders to understand whether pupils have met weekly targets. Leaders listen to pupils' views. For example, ideas for cross-curricular activities in science came from pupils. In year 2, they created clay hedgehogs, wrote poems on science topics and researched the life and work of David Attenborough.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. When issues arise, they are quick to protect and support their pupils. They share a mantra of 'if in doubt shout', so that safeguarding concerns are addressed quickly. New staff benefit from a comprehensive induction programme, which includes safeguarding. They understand what to look out for and how to report concerns. Leaders anticipate how pupils may react to changes in their circumstances and put support in place before the need arises.

Leaders are quick to escalate the seriousness of online safety. For example, a recent issue led to leaders using external experts to highlight dangers associated with pupils using the internet. Pupils told me that they know how to keep safe online because they have been given information and advice in lessons and during the e-safety week. They told me that, if they have any concerns about what they see, they would tell a responsible adult, leave the website and not access it again.

Inspection findings

- At the beginning of the inspection we agreed two lines of enquiry. The first was to explore outcomes for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). This was because this group of pupils makes up a significant proportion of the school roll.
- Leaders appreciate that, for many pupils, the school is key in teaching them to read and write and are determined to strengthen all pupils' literacy skills. Leaders draw on the experience of staff at the school to achieve this. Practitioners who are skilled in supporting EAL pupils deliver training to increase the skills of all staff. Teachers understand how EAL pupils develop their communication skills and ensure that the curriculum promotes this. Overall, this group of pupils makes

strong progress.

- Leaders recognise that, for EAL pupils, early support and intervention in reading and writing in English have the greatest long-term impact on their progress. Therefore, leaders begin to identify the needs of individual children before they start at the school. Leaders communicate well with new parents, and an extensive induction programme is in place. Leaders use home visits to learn about children's abilities and to involve parents and carers in the education of their children from the start.
- Leaders have high expectations for all pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language. These expectations are highlighted in the way leaders compare different groups of pupils' performances and prioritise the quality of teaching in the classroom.
- Leaders' emphasis on vocabulary extends across all subjects. For example, when introducing themed topics, teachers review pupils' technical vocabulary. Once topics are completed, pupils consolidate their understanding of newly learned vocabulary by writing out definitions.
- Pupils react well to teachers' written feedback. Their spelling and vocabulary improve, because teachers draw their pupils' attention to new words and phrases. For example, when discussing misspelled words, pupils learn how to spell the words correctly and define their meaning.
- Leaders compare EAL pupils with other groups of pupils. Historically, these pupils have made progress at least in line with their peers. Evidence from the inspection shows that EAL pupils continue to make at least the same progress as their peers.
- Leaders' information on pupils' progress is robust and accurate. They know their pupils well. For example, leaders implemented a recent intervention following a school holiday. This is because they know that some pupils lose ground over the holidays. Outcomes at the end of key stages 1 and 2 for EAL pupils and their peers are strong and well above those of their peers nationally.
- The second line of enquiry was to explore the effectiveness of the governing body. This was agreed because there are vacant positions on the governing body.
- Governors are reflective. A recent audit highlighted some gaps in governors' skills that may affect their ability to support and challenge school leaders. Leaders, including governors, have, as a result, commissioned external experts to support their work.
- Governors have not successfully filled vacant positions. This is a work in progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- vacancies on the governing body are filled, and any governance arrangements ensure appropriate challenge and support are maintained.

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

Yours sincerely

Jason Hughes
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I looked at a range of pupils' work alongside teachers and middle and senior leaders. I met with governors and spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone. Leaders accompanied me on visits to lessons, where we observed teaching and learning, spoke with pupils and looked at their work. I examined a range of documentation relating to safeguarding, including the single central record of staff checks.

I scrutinised Ofsted's online survey for parents (52 responses) and associated commentary (50 comments), the staff survey (15 responses), as well as responses to the pupil survey (59 responses). I examined the school's website and reviewed information about pupils' progress, attainment and attendance. I also considered the school's evaluation of how well it is doing, its improvement priorities and assessment information for current pupils.