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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
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30 January 2020

Ms Theresa McManus
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
Herlwyn Avenue
Ruislip
Middlesex
HA4 6EZ

Dear Ms McManus

Subject inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 15 January 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. The findings do not change the overall effectiveness judgement of outstanding from the last section 5 inspection.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for a no formal designation inspection of schools. The inspection was carried out to enable Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to better understand the quality of education in specific subjects provided by outstanding primary schools.

Main findings

Leaders have a clear plan in place for what pupils will learn in French. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 have a weekly French lesson. Occasionally, pupils miss parts of lessons for afternoon intervention sessions but leaders try to avoid this as much as possible. Each class has lessons delivered by their class teacher for one term and by the curriculum leader for two terms. The school does not have a trained languages teacher. However, the curriculum leader has a passion for languages and has developed in her role over time. She delivers training to class teachers and works closely with them on delivering the curriculum. All teachers have access to a bank of resources to help ensure that all classes receive the same curriculum. Teachers have varying levels of knowledge and skills in French. Some of them lack confidence in French. They are well supported by the curriculum leader but sometimes are too ambitious in their use of French in the classroom. Pupils do not always learn correct pronunciation.

The curriculum is topic-led. This means that, each term, pupils learn a number of topics, some more closely linked than others. For example, in the first term of Year

5, pupils learn prepositions, places in town, the verb 'aller' and means of transport. This allows them to build up vocabulary and grammar to form increasingly complex sentences. Most topics, though, are selected to widen pupils' vocabulary and are not taught in any particular order. This means that pupils do not always build on what they have learned before. When they do, pupils can achieve more as a result.

Leaders give careful thought to the vocabulary that is chosen and make sure that pupils learn it in manageable chunks. Pupils can recall vocabulary well when they have learned it in a memorable way and/or revisited it. Pupils were keen to sing various songs they have learned in lessons over the years. When vocabulary has not been embedded, pupils struggle to remember it. Older pupils are adept at using bilingual dictionaries to look up new words. Pupils learn basic French grammar, building on their knowledge each year. For example, they learn about regular adjectives in Years 3 and 4, then progress to irregular adjectives in Years 5 and 6. Older pupils learn about verb conjugation. Pupils struggle to apply grammar rules, particularly in their written French. They do not have many opportunities to create new sentences by themselves beyond structured writing templates.

The curriculum has a sharp focus on developing pupils' listening and speaking skills. Phonics is now taught in French lessons from Year 3. Pupils learn common sounds and apply an action to them. This helps them to remember the sounds. Year 4 pupils told me all about 'the three musketeers of on/en/an' and how to say the 'oi' sound. They could pronounce unknown words correctly using the rules they have learned.

The curriculum includes many opportunities for pupils to learn about French culture and about other languages. At Christmas, pupils in each year group performed 'Silent Night' in various languages, including Mandarin, German and Polish. They celebrate the different languages spoken within the school. Pupils also have an annual 'Europe Day' where they can find out about French-speaking countries and other cultures. The curriculum leader aims to extend the French pen-pal scheme so that all Year 5 and Year 6 pupils have this opportunity.

Evidence

I met with the headteacher, the curriculum leader for French and two class teachers. I did a learning walk at the request of the headteacher to see how the early years and some key stage 1 classes promoted language learning. I visited French lessons in Year 6, Year 3 and Year 4. I met with two groups of pupils from the lessons I visited to discuss their learning in French. I also reviewed their French work. I looked at the curriculum overview and the 'milestones' by which pupils are assessed in French.

Context

The school is larger than the average-sized school. There are currently 670 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils included in the register of special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

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

Yours sincerely

Jude Wilson

Her Majesty's Inspector