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Mrs Lisa Montandon
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Dear Mrs Lisa Montandon

Short inspection of Our Lady of Compassion Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 08 February 2017, 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 September 2012.

This school continues to be good.

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since taking over the headship of the school in 2013 you have continued to secure improvements ensuring that Our Lady of Compassion Catholic Primary School remains a purposeful place in which to learn, underpinned by its strong and distinctive Catholic ethos.

You have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Consequently, you have focused on the correct improvement priorities and taken decisive, effective action to address areas of weakness. An example of this is the improvements you have made to provision in the early years ensuring children get off to a really strong start. These improvements have seen standards rise significantly in the early years over the last three years.

Your improvement priorities are sharply focused on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in all key stages. As a result, standards and support for pupils continue to improve and pupils' progress is accelerating.

You and your staff have taken effective steps to address the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. You have strengthened the leadership team by supporting subject leaders to become more focused on pupils' progress. The new assessment system you have introduced enables you and your teachers to check pupils' progress frequently and accurately. Currently, however,

you are not making full use of all the information you gather. You have strengthened the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection by implementing effective coaching. This has resulted in teachers developing their questioning skills and being able to provide greater challenge to pupils in writing and mathematics.

Over time, academic standards at the school have been above average. For several years, Year 6 pupils' end-of-key-stage results in reading and writing have been consistently above national figures. Mathematics results have also been strong and usually above the national average, but a bit below the standard seen in English. You are alert to this and have taken steps to sharpen up aspects of mathematics teaching. A recent local authority review, for instance, noted that in some classes pupils repeated mathematics work unnecessarily and some tasks did not offer sufficient challenge. You have acted on this information and improved assessment in mathematics so teachers now have a better understanding of what pupils understand and can do. Consequently, new work builds more carefully on pupils' existing skills and progress rates and standards are catching up with reading and writing. You are keeping a close watch on classroom teaching and pupils' work to make sure this continues.

Since the previous inspection, overall attendance rates have risen and most pupils attend regularly and on time. Registers are taken promptly and any pupil who arrives late has to sign in at the front door. In fact, this system has been tightened up in recent times to make sure staff know who is here and who is absent. Lateness, however, is rare.

Over time outcomes in key stage 1 have been strong. However, in 2016 this dipped to below national expectations. You recognised this and have identified reasons why this happened. Furthermore, while the number of disadvantaged pupils in your school is relatively small, some of the pupils in this group did not perform as well as other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics across the school at the end of 2016. You and your governors are aware of this and have identified it as an area for improvement.

The school is proud of its Catholic ethos and your school motto, 'To live as Jesus taught us', underpins all that you do. Parents value the strong relationships and commitment by all staff to promote the well-being of pupils. Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning and work hard to achieve their best. They are extremely polite and well-mannered and conduct around the school is excellent. They say they are happy, feel safe and enjoy their learning. Pupils say that bullying 'doesn't happen very often', and they are confident that teachers deal with it quickly and effectively when it does happen.

Governance is a strength of the school. Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses as a result of the information you provide. They are able to use this information and external information, such as the inspection dashboard, confidently in order to hold school leaders to account. They have clear roles and responsibilities and visit the school often. They are very supportive of you

and your staff and recognise the way you have moved the school forward since the last inspection.

The majority of parents express supportive and appreciative views about the school. They particularly value the school's caring ethos and the approachability of teaching staff. However, results from the parents' questionnaire show that there are a few mixed views particularly around the quality of communication and how the school responds to concerns.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements and the school website contains the required information. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Appropriate procedures are followed for the recruitment of staff. The checks on staff's suitability to work with children are thorough and detailed. All staff and governors recognise that they have a collective responsibility to keep pupils safe and take every precaution to ensure this. You have established a strong safeguarding culture and staff and governors have undertaken appropriate, up-to-date training. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are safe in school. The school's new system for recording concerns is used appropriately by staff and this enables you to support vulnerable pupils and their families well. You access support and advice from external agencies quickly. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe from a range of potential dangers, including cyber-bullying. Governors have ensured that the school's computers have appropriate filtering systems in place. Governors carry out a safeguarding audit annually.

Inspection findings

- The improved provision in early years ensures that children receive a strong foundation for their education. Children make good progress from their individual starting points and the proportion of children who have attained a good level of development has risen over the last three years. The majority of children now leave Reception exceeding national expectations for their age. They are ready and well prepared for the challenges of Year 1.
- In 2016, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 dipped. You have been swift to address this issue and have strengthened teaching in key stage 1. Evidence in books and from your school assessment shows that progress in key stage 1 has improved and pupils are working at the expected standard for their age. The children I heard read in Year 2 demonstrated an enjoyment of reading, fluency, confidence and a secure knowledge of phonic strategies.
- Additional support has been put in place to accelerate progress for the cohort of pupils affected by this dip in performance who are now in Year 3. Work in books and your assessment results show that these pupils are catching up.
- For the last three years, progress in mathematics at key stage 2, while broadly in line with national results, has not been as strong as progress in reading and writing. You have already identified this as an improvement priority for the school

and have taken steps to further strengthen teaching and learning in mathematics in key stage 2. This includes supporting less able and disadvantaged pupils more effectively and providing a greater level of challenge. Consequently, progress in mathematics is catching up with progress in reading and writing.

- While attendance rates on the whole are rising, there are a small number of pupils who miss a lot of school. In some cases, this is with good reason, but not always. School leaders do challenge unnecessary absence and these are reducing as a result of the work you have been doing. Even so, you and other leaders are not regularly analysing absence data with sufficient attention. This limits your ability to pick up patterns or trends over time and to fully evaluate the impact of your actions to improve attendance.
- You have robust systems in place for responding to and dealing with complaints. Responses to complaints or concerns are made in a timely manner, following proper processes which are followed through to completion. Where necessary, further advice is sought and followed. Parents that I spoke to, and many of those who responded to the online questionnaire, said that they feel comfortable to approach you or your teachers if they have any concerns. They are confident that their concerns would be quickly responded to.
- Leaders and governors take steps to gather parental views and you have recently set up a parents' forum to strengthen engagement with parents and to involve them in decision-making. However, in the most recent responses to Parent View, a proportion of parents express some dissatisfaction with aspects of communication. For example, a few parents think they do not get enough information about how well their children are doing at school. Others do not feel suitably informed about how the school deals with any incidents of poor behaviour. Leaders are looking into ways to improve the flow of information further and to understand why some parents have these views.
- In 2016 disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 did not perform as well as other pupils. Similarly, some of the less able pupils in both key stages missed the targets set for them. The new assessment system you have put in place allows you and your teachers to closely track and monitor individual pupil's progress. You are beginning to use this to target teaching appropriately and current pupils in both these groups are making faster progress. Nevertheless, leaders still need to maintain this focus to ensure that all pupils achieve the standard they are capable of. Governors are also aware of the need to pay close attention to how the pupil premium grant is spent and the impact this is having on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- The staff have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. Most have embraced recent changes and work as a supportive team. Teachers know their pupils well and teach engaging lessons. The vast majority of parents say teaching is strong and their children are making good progress as a result.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- use the school's effective assessment systems with greater rigour to ensure that all pupils do as well as they possibly can with a special focus on the less able and the disadvantaged pupils
- continue to analyse the wealth of information available accurately and promptly, to ensure that improvement priorities are precise and their impact can be measured against pupils' progress and attendance
- develop further ways to engage with all parents so that all parents say they feel informed about and involved in their child's education.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Satchwell
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with senior leaders to review the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. Lines of enquiry were agreed: how well pupils in key stage 1 are supported in their learning; the extent to which leaders have created a culture of safeguarding, including improving attendance; what attainment on entry to Reception is like and whether children make sufficient progress in early years; the quality of the school's engagement with parents; and how well pupils are supported to make progress in mathematics.

I conducted a learning walk in key stage 1 and year 3 with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, looking at work in pupils' books and observing learning. I spoke to pupils in year 2 and listened to them read. I carried out a scrutiny of year 6 pupils' books. I met with leaders to discuss assessment and attendance information.

I met with three representatives of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with the school's local authority adviser.

I carried out safeguarding checks including checks on the school's single central record and the steps followed when recruiting new members of staff. I met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss work with external agencies and how the school supports vulnerable children and their families.

I scrutinised a wide range of documentation including the school website, governors' minutes, local authority notes of visits, teaching records, school's self-evaluation form, school improvement priorities, training records and child protection

files.

I met with parents before school and reviewed the internal parents' survey conducted by the school. I reviewed the responses to Ofsted's on line Parent View questionnaire, responses to Ofsted's free text, the responses to the staff survey and the responses to the pupil survey.