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Catherine McMahon
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Dear Mrs McMahon

Short inspection of Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 18 December 2018, 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 January 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 the 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.

Your determined leadership has ensured that those around you share your passion for school improvement. Your meticulous monitoring of all aspects of the school's work has enabled you to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

You have developed a highly capable team of senior and middle leaders who have had a significant impact on improving teaching and learning. Together, you ensure that teachers receive the training and guidance needed to promote effective learning. Parents are very positive about the school and your leadership. They reported that 'the school is a wonderful place of support and learning', and that their children are 'stretched and challenged'. Pupils agreed that this is true.

The atmosphere around the school is calm and friendly. Pupils are polite and show respect to adults and each other. They are keen to learn and participate well in lessons. Leaders have been successful in addressing the recommendations made at the previous inspection. There is evidence in classrooms and in pupils' books of greater challenge for the most able pupils. Teachers' feedback in key stage 1 has a real impact on raising standards by enabling pupils to know how to improve their work.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong and effective culture of safeguarding in the school. School leaders and governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities to help keep pupils safe. The single central register meets requirements, and is checked at regular intervals by governors. Safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed regularly. Detailed records are stored securely to ensure confidentiality. All staff and governors receive timely training to develop their understanding and skills in identifying concerns relating to child protection. Recent well-considered changes to the site have increased safety. Pupils reported that they feel safe at school and they know who to speak to if they have any concerns.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry focused on how well teachers promote pupils' progress in writing in key stage 2, especially for those capable of reaching the higher standard. This is because in 2018 the proportion of pupils reaching this standard in writing was lower than in reading and mathematics. A focus on the teaching of complex writing skills can be evidenced in all lessons and pupils' work across key stage 2. The pupils' ability to apply their learning is visible in their writing in subjects such as science, history and religious education (RE). This is a real strength in the teaching of writing across the school.
- Leaders are clear and systematic in their approach to raising standards in the teaching of writing. They hold staff to account for the progress of all pupils, and have the highest expectations of what needs to be achieved. This is evident in the consistently high quality of writing currently in pupils' books across key stage 2. Staff show that they know their pupils well through their effective questioning, use of individual targets and precise feedback in lessons. This ensures that pupils improve their writing confidently, and strengthens their progress.
- Careful thought and planning have gone into the choosing of texts and topics to engage pupils from different groups. This has had a marked effect on the quality of current outcomes. Following a full external check of the school's marking and pupils' outcomes, leaders have reviewed the teaching of particular writing styles. You have incorporated more non-fiction texts into the planning across the school. This gives pupils more opportunities to write at length in subjects where they are starting to use increasingly complex subject-specific vocabulary in their work. This is beginning to be successful in some of the foundation subjects.
- My second line of enquiry focused on what leaders have done to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils in mathematics in key stage 1. This is because in 2018 these pupils made less progress than their peers.
- Inspection evidence showed that the school's systematic approach to the teaching of mathematics has a direct and positive impact on pupils' progress. There are many examples that show that disadvantaged pupils now work in line with their peers.
- The use of practical resources in teaching has helped pupils to grasp concepts

quickly, and apply them in their learning. This approach enables pupils to gain independence and reasoning skills, and understand the different concepts in the mathematics curriculum.

- My final line of enquiry focused on the wider curriculum, beyond the core subjects, and the way in which the school designs this to ensure that pupils are challenged in all subjects.
- Leaders are dynamic and forward thinking. They have taken a base curriculum and improved it so that it provides challenge and engagement for all pupils. There are exciting opportunities in subjects like science, where pupils have the chance to send a camera into space to learn more about the atmosphere. Pupils regularly use technology to enhance their learning, and learn key skills like coding to develop their understanding of technology.
- There is careful monitoring and assessment across all subject areas. Leaders use this to support teachers with their planning, and to ensure that challenge is evident in all lessons in all subjects. Pupils' progress is clear in their outcomes and work across different subjects, including science and art. This is because the school plans its curriculum effectively. There is an understanding of how to teach the skills and knowledge pupils need to embed their learning.
- Subjects are all equally important and there is evidence of strong outcomes across the board. Pupils talked about the opportunities they have through visits and visitors to learn more about a topic. Pupils' follow-up work reflects the meaningful learning that they gain from these experiences.
- Pupils are beginning to transfer subject-specific skills routinely across mathematics and science. They talked about the links that they make using sources in history, and how this also improves their writing in RE and the humanities. This is an area that the school plans to develop.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Pupils continue to apply subject-specific skills in their writing across all subjects to ensure that greater proportions achieve at a higher level.

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

Yours sincerely

Karen Matthews
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held meetings with you, senior leaders and other members of staff. I met with three governors, including the chair. I also spoke with a representative of the local authority. I met with pupils from the school council. I visited classrooms across the school 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 development plan, information about the use of pupil premium funding, information about pupils' progress and documents relating to safeguarding. I also looked at information on the school's website. We analysed the confidential responses to the online inspection surveys from 13 members of staff. I also took into account the views of three parents who wrote, and the free-text responses from 105 parents who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.