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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Miss Elizabeth Doonan
Headteacher
St Catherine Catholic Primary School
Money Lane
West Drayton
UB7 7NX

Dear Miss Doonan

Short inspection of St Catherine Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 February 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 October 2014.

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 been well supported by other senior leaders and the governing body to ensure that the school continues to improve. In 2017, pupils achieved well at the end of key stages 1 and 2. However, at the end of key stage 2, pupils make better progress in reading than in writing and mathematics. In addition, the number of pupils working above the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 is higher in reading than in writing and mathematics. You are not complacent and are aware that progress could be stronger in writing and mathematics and for some groups of pupils.

At the time of the previous inspection, the school was asked to accelerate boys' progress in writing by providing them with more activities that encourage them to write. You now make sure that boys have more opportunities to write and develop their writing through enriched first-hand experiences. This has resulted in improved progress in writing for boys across the school.

You, the deputy headteacher, other senior leaders and governors have high expectations for your pupils and encourage them to achieve their best. You have created a safe and enjoyable learning environment and pupils said that they enjoy coming to school. Parents and carers are very happy with the provision you offer their children. One parent commented, 'It's a great small school that the children really feel part of. There is a real community spirit.'

Pupils are happy and enjoy learning across the curriculum. Pupils look smart in their school uniform and wear it with pride. In every class visited during the inspection,

pupils were polite and willing to discuss their learning. School staff support pupils well, and relationships between pupils and adults are positive. Pupils work well together, and there is a strong sense of community across the school.

Children in Nursery and Reception get off to a good start, and teaching of early reading and writing is effective. Children make good progress during their time in Nursery and Reception. The proportion of children leaving Reception who have achieved a good level of development has improved year on year for the last three years.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Thorough safeguarding checks are carried out when recruiting staff, governors and volunteers. The single central record of pre-recruitment checks for staff is up to date and checked regularly by school leaders and by the safeguarding governor. There has been recent investment to improve the security of the school site, and visitors are now unable to access the school site without permission.

The safeguarding policy meets current child protection requirements, and all staff understand the procedures they need to follow to keep pupils safe. Staff are kept well informed about child protection matters through regular training and updates. They share any concerns they have about pupils' safety and well-being appropriately with safeguarding leaders. When necessary, the school works effectively with parents and outside agencies to ensure that pupils are safe.

Pupils said that they feel safe in school and are confident to speak to staff about any concerns they have. They know that adults are there to help them and keep them safe. The majority of parents responded that their children feel safe at school. Pupils are taught how to keep safe and have a good awareness of the potential dangers they could face online. Pupils said that there are not any bullies at school and incidents of poor behaviour are rare. When these do occur, pupils said that they are dealt with effectively by school staff.

Inspection findings

- In order to establish whether the school continues to provide a good standard of education, we agreed three key lines of enquiry to focus on during the inspection.
- While the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in writing at the end of key stage 2 is in line with national results, the proportion achieving greater depth is below. You had already identified improvements in writing as a key priority, so we agreed to explore the impact of leaders' actions.
- Leaders' actions to improve standards in writing are beginning to have a positive impact. One intervention aimed at engaging and motivating reluctant boys to write was very successful and has subsequently been rolled out across other

classes. However, there are still too few pupils working above the standards expected for their age in writing.

- The second focus was how well pupils are achieving in mathematics. In 2017, Year 6 pupils' progress was not as good as in reading. In addition, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard was below average at the end of key stage 2. School leaders have identified that this a key priority. There have been a number of changes implemented to improve the quality of mathematics teaching and outcomes for pupils.
- The leadership of mathematics is strong, which has resulted in an improvement in the quality of mathematics teaching across the school. A new calculation policy has been written and implemented to ensure that there is consistency in the approach to mathematics teaching. This has been shared with parents through well-attended parent workshops and a series of video demonstrations taught by the mathematics leader. As a result, pupils' calculation skills have improved, which has helped improve their performance across the mathematics curriculum.
- The focus on problem solving and reasoning in mathematics has helped to increase the proportion of pupils working at the higher standard in mathematics. However, in some classes, there is not sufficient challenge for the most able pupils and they are not making the progress they are capable of.
- The final focus for the inspection was to explore the progress of disadvantaged pupils and the use of pupil premium funding. This is because there is a difference between how well disadvantaged pupils achieve in writing and mathematics and how all pupils achieve. In addition, the progress of disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 2 was lower in writing and mathematics than that of other pupils in this year group.
- School leaders have identified this as an area for improvement and are using the pupil premium grant effectively. Additional teachers have been employed to tutor disadvantaged pupils in writing and mathematics. A lunchtime homework club has been introduced for disadvantaged pupils who struggle to complete homework at home. This has helped to ensure that this group of pupils is not left behind. You track the achievement of disadvantaged pupils regularly and use assessment information to hold teachers to account in pupil progress meetings. There are plans to involve the English and mathematics leaders in these meetings. This will help to devolve leadership and allow these leaders to have a greater understanding of the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- These initiatives have made a positive impact to the disadvantaged pupils and, while there are still differences in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils, these differences are beginning to close.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers further develop pupils' writing skills so that a greater proportion are working at greater depth within the expected standard for writing

- there is sufficient challenge in mathematics lessons so that pupils, particularly the most able, make the progress that they are capable of.

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

Yours sincerely

Nicholas Cornell
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection began with a discussion about your school self-evaluation and what you and your school leaders consider to be the strengths and areas for improvement. Following this, we agreed the key lines of enquiry. During the inspection, I observed teaching in every class alongside a member of the leadership team and looked at a selection of pupils' work from all year groups. I also reviewed a large sample of pupils' English and mathematics books. I spoke to pupils at breaktime and lunchtime and in classes. I spoke with some parents informally at the end of the school day. I reviewed a range of the school's documents, including its self-evaluation document, school development plan, assessment information, governing body meeting minutes and safeguarding information. I checked the documents on the school's website.

I met with three members of the governing body and spoke to a local authority adviser. I considered the views of 56 parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 52 free-text responses. In addition, the 10 responses to the staff survey were considered.