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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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2 December 2016

Mrs Julie Taylor
Headteacher
Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School
Lyttelton Road
Stechford
Birmingham
West Midlands
B33 8BL

Dear Mrs Taylor

Short inspection of Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 3 November 2016, 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As the former deputy headteacher, you were acting headteacher from January 2016 and became the permanent headteacher at the start of this academic year. The two former assistant headteachers are now the deputy headteachers. This has allowed leaders to build further on improvements that were already in place.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have taken effective action to improve aspects of school's work since the last inspection. For example, as standards in writing were below the national average at the end of key stage 2 in 2014, leaders ensured that there was a consistent drive to improve the quality of writing throughout the school. As a result, the outcomes achieved by last year's Year 6 in writing were well above the national average.

School leaders have used pupil premium funding effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils benefit from a range of enrichment activities and additional support. This has helped them to attain better results than other pupils nationally in phonics. However, leaders acknowledge that the differences between the overall attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others are not diminishing quickly enough at key stages 1 and 2.

Key stage 2 outcomes in mathematics were not as strong as in other subjects in 2015 and reading results did not match those in other subjects in 2016. Leaders took effective action to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics and results improved in 2016. Strategies are now in place to ensure that all groups of pupils read appropriate material regularly and current pupils are making faster progress. However, this has not yet had an impact on lifting end-of-key-stage outcomes in reading.

In response to the findings of the previous inspection, teachers have ensured that pupils present their work well in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Good-quality handwriting is insisted on and, when required, pupils are helped to improve their presentation by using special pencil grips. Staff also model good handwriting and presentation to the pupils.

Teachers plan activities that provide challenge to pupils of all abilities, including the most able. Pupils' work, and other evidence seen during this inspection, indicated that all pupils are set tasks that make them think deeply about their learning and lead to good progress. As a result, in 2016, two thirds of pupils with high prior attainment achieved a high score in mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling. In addition, middle-ability pupils made faster progress across key stage 1 than similar pupils nationally. Although current pupils are making good progress in a range of subjects, the school's system for analysing the progress of different ability groups is not yet fully embedded.

Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors visit the school regularly and use their skills and knowledge to offer appropriate support and challenge to senior leaders. They receive independent reports about the school and ask informed questions about the information they receive from leaders. Consequently, they have a clear understanding about the school's provision and performance.

Pupils are happy in school. They enjoy learning and feel well cared for. They behave well and feel safe. Parents are extremely supportive of the school. Of the parents who made their views known to the lead inspector, almost all would recommend the school to other parents.

Safeguarding is effective.

Keeping children safe is a core part of the school's culture. Safeguarding policy and practice are detailed and robust, and high-quality records are kept and stored securely. Staff are clear about their roles and safeguarding responsibilities and have received up-to-date training. They have a thorough understanding of what they should do if they have concerns about a child and referrals are made in a timely and appropriate manner. School leaders use outside agencies effectively and follow up referrals tenaciously. As a result, vulnerable children are well protected.

Pupils are taught to stay safe and the provision for online safety is very strong. Internet use is monitored closely and pupils can alert senior staff to concerns, if any arise.

Inspection findings

- There is a positive and ambitious culture within the school and staff have high aspirations for all the pupils. Staff work well as a team and morale is high. Staff feel that the school is 'a happy place in which to work'.
- Responses to the staff questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive. All staff who responded to the questions set believe that the school has improved since the last inspection. They are proud to be members of staff at the school and all believe that it is well led and managed.
- Members of the recently formed senior leadership team work well together and leadership at all levels is effective. Leaders' evaluation of the school's work is accurate and any weaknesses that have emerged have been tackled. For example, decisive action has been taken to improve the quality of teaching in areas where leaders judged it not to be strong enough. You and other leaders are also aware that the recently introduced system for analysing the progress of different ability groups is not yet operating with maximum efficiency.
- Staff value the training they receive and are set clear targets for how to improve their practice. These targets are monitored closely and staff are given additional support and training as required. Staff take opportunities to learn from the best practice in the school and newly qualified teachers are particularly well supported.
- Pupils are clear about what they are learning and value the work that they do. They participate fully in a range of activities and work well in whole-class sessions, in groups, and when completing individual tasks. Their ability to overcome difficulties that they may face is developed by teachers giving them opportunities to think things through for themselves, talking to other pupils and by using information on classroom walls or from an additional set of resources known as the 'powerzone'.
- Teaching assistants help pupils of all abilities to make progress and all staff use questions effectively. Classroom expectations are high and established routines allow pupils to have a clear understanding of what is expected from them.
- Teachers follow the school's marking policy and the work in pupils' books shows that classroom activities challenge pupils of all abilities. Consequently, pupils make good progress from their starting points across a range of subjects.
- Writing has improved over time because teachers have high expectations and pupils successfully transfer skills that they learn in English to their work in other subjects. This means that pupils are given opportunities to embed their literacy skills across the curriculum.
- Numeracy is also taught effectively across the curriculum, for example in science. This has helped to reinforce pupils' mathematical skills and contributed to the improved outcomes in mathematics last year.
- Pupils read appropriate texts for information and enjoyment. The most able pupils read regularly and fluently. Those who find reading more difficult can use the sounds that letters represent to work out words.

- Pupils have been taken to Birmingham library and they are encouraged to borrow books from the school and class libraries. As reading outcomes were below those achieved in other areas in the Year 6 assessments in 2016, leaders have rightly identified reading as an area for development. New books have been purchased and boys and pupils from Asian backgrounds are benefiting from reading intervention groups. Reading has a high profile in the school and standards are rising.
- Over time, children have made good progress from their starting points on entry to school. Since the previous inspection, outcomes in phonics have been above the national average and pupils have attained broadly in line with national averages at the end of key stage 1. This indicates good progress from their starting points.
- Previous weaknesses in key stage 2 outcomes have been addressed. For example, the progress of girls in key stage 2 in writing and mathematics improved in 2016. Evidence seen during this inspection revealed that the majority of pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- Within this positive picture at both key stages, disadvantaged pupils of all abilities are reaching increasingly higher standards. Even so, there is still a difference between their attainment in English and mathematics and that of other pupils nationally. School leaders are aware of this and are targeting the use of pupil premium funding with increasing effectiveness.
- Pupils behave well. Incidents of poor behaviour are very rare and there have been no permanent exclusions and very few fixed-term exclusions since the last inspection. Staff, pupils and parents are very positive about behaviour and pupils value the rewards system in the school and feel it is used fairly.
- Pupils feel safe in school and parents and staff also believe that pupils are kept safe. Pupils are taught how to stay safe and benefit from a range of outside providers giving them information about how to stay safe in different situations. Systems to keep pupils safe are robust and the site is secure.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They are tolerant and respectful and have an appropriate understanding of democracy. They are taught about all the major religions and have visited different places of worship. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school's work.
- As pupils are encouraged to be active and healthy eating is promoted with success. In recent times, Birmingham City Council recognised the school's work in tackling childhood obesity. Pupils' emotional well-being is also promoted well.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities in the school. Pupils are elected to the pupil parliament, which makes decisions about fund-raising, and pupils work together as 'reading buddies'. They are proud to be members of the school.
- Parents are full of praise for the school. They receive regular and useful information about their children's progress and believe the school responds well to any concerns that they raise. Parents of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities feel particularly well

supported. Vulnerable families are helped in a compassionate and professional manner.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- actions to improve attainment in reading are reviewed regularly and revised to ensure that pupils make better progress from their starting points
- pupil premium funding is used to further reduce differences in attainment, at key stages 1 and 2, between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally
- the assessment system is embedded, evaluated and refined in order to provide information which helps staff analyse and further improve the progress of pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Mosley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteachers, a group of staff, the chair of the governing body and three other governors to discuss the quality of education in the school. My particular focus areas were: pupils' outcomes, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, aspects of personal development, behaviour and welfare, safeguarding and the effectiveness of leadership and management.

I also spoke on the telephone with a representative of the Birmingham education partnership and a consultant who advises you on school improvement matters. I met with a number of parents at the start of the day and considered a letter from one parent, 39 responses to Parent View, 20 free text responses from parents about the school, and 17 responses to the staff questionnaire.

I spoke to pupils throughout the day, listened to a small number of pupils read and made short visits to every classroom with you. I looked at the work of current and former pupils and reviewed a range of documentation, including: information about pupils' progress, the school leaders' evaluation of performance, governors' minutes and documents related to safety and the behaviour of pupils.