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15 November 2017

Miss Fran Morrison  
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School  
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Dear Miss Morrison

### **Short inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 2 November 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 February 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Your school provides pupils with a calm, friendly and hard-working place to learn. The school's family atmosphere is reflected in one pupil's comment: 'If you spend just one day here, you know everyone by the end of the day'. Pupils are welcoming, polite and well-behaved. They greet visitors warmly and speak enthusiastically about their school.

You have addressed the key issues identified at the time of the previous inspection in full. You and your deputy headteacher, and your governors, have developed a strong team of leaders, teachers and teaching assistants who share your high aspirations for pupils' learning and behaviour. At the time of the previous inspection, you were asked to develop teaching assistants' roles. Teaching assistants are now much clearer about their roles and make a valuable contribution to teaching. They work closely and effectively alongside teachers to support pupils' learning. The inspection team also asked you to give pupils more opportunities to use information and communication technology. You have updated the teaching of computing skills since the previous inspection to ensure that pupils use technology regularly to support their learning.

Marked improvements in teaching since the previous inspection have strengthened pupils' learning considerably during key stage 1. For example, changes to phonics

teaching have generated good progress in developing pupils' key reading and writing skills. The results of the Year 1 phonics check have doubled since the previous inspection and matched the national average in 2016. Rising standards at the end of key stage 1 have ensured that pupils are better prepared for the next stage of their learning.

More-recent improvements in the quality of teaching during key stage 2 have already had a dramatic effect on pupils' learning. Across the curriculum, pupils' progress has accelerated rapidly since the start of this term. You and your team are keenly aware of the need to embed these improvements in teaching so that they are sustained, particularly in writing. You are rightly focusing on making sure that teaching during key stage 2 develops and extends pupils' writing skills consistently well as they move up through the school.

You have improved the accuracy of teachers' assessments during the past year. This has given you and your leadership team a more reliable picture of pupils' progress across the school. However, it is too soon for your subject leaders to have developed a sufficiently precise view of the quality of teaching and learning in different classes and year groups.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Strong relationships throughout the school ensure that pupils feel secure and valued. Pupils feel comfortable talking to their teachers and do so confidently. This contributes well to their well-being and to their safety. Pupils feel very safe in school and say that they are getting on well with their learning. You and your team work closely with parents and agencies to support pupils' personal development and well-being. Parents say that school leaders take good care of their children.

You and your leadership team make sure that all safeguarding arrangements are robust and fit for purpose. You complete recruitment and safeguarding checks promptly when new members of staff are appointed and keep careful records. Up-to-date safeguarding policies underpin the school's work so that staff and pupils can work safely. You and your team make sure that the school is secure and well-organised, so that pupils are safe. Effective policies, well-established procedures and clear lines of communication ensure that any concerns about pupils' safety are quickly identified and addressed.

### **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, I focused particularly on:
  - how successfully children in early years are prepared for the next stage of their learning
  - whether pupils of all abilities, including the most able, make sufficiently strong progress during key stage 2, particularly in writing
  - how effectively leaders secure pupils' good attendance
  - how well leaders ensure that pupils acquire computing skills.

- Children make strong progress during early years and are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. Improvements in teaching since the previous inspection led to a rise in the proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2016, with an equally positive picture of children's achievement in 2017. Teachers assess children's starting points quickly and accurately at the start of Reception Year. They are knowledgeable about children's needs and plan activities very well to support their learning and development.
- Teachers and teaching assistants share the same high expectations of all children in Reception Year. They work together effectively as a team and respond flexibly and promptly to children's interests and needs. As a result, children of all abilities join in with a wide range of activities enthusiastically. Children behave well and rapidly grow in confidence and self-esteem. They enjoy the company of their classmates and warmly welcome others who want to join in with their games.
- In recent months, developments in the quality of teaching during key stage 2 have improved pupils' progress substantially across the curriculum. Teachers have much higher expectations of pupils' learning and insist that pupils do their best. Teachers are more confident about planning learning for pupils with different starting points and provide increasingly challenging tasks for the most able. As a result, pupils of all abilities are making better progress than previously.
- Pupils' written work has improved dramatically since the start of this term. Improvements in the teaching of grammar and punctuation mean that pupils write increasingly well for a range of different purposes. Leaders are now rightly focusing on making sure that teaching continues to extend pupils' writing skills strongly enough so that standards continue to rise as they move up through the year groups.
- Pupils are keen to learn and attend school regularly. Attendance rates are consistently in line with national averages and in some years, above them. The school's attendance and welfare officer keeps a close eye on pupils' attendance. She works very effectively with leaders, agencies and parents and has secured impressive improvements in individual pupils' attendance.
- Leaders give the teaching of computing skills a much higher priority than at the time of the previous inspection. They use high-quality training effectively so that teachers have the knowledge and confidence needed to teach the national curriculum for computing successfully. This effective teaching means that pupils of all ages learn how to use tools such as laptops, electronic tablets and programmable devices successfully in a range of subjects.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching builds pupils' writing skills consistently well as they move up through the year groups
- subject leaders develop a more precise view of the quality of teaching and learning in different classes and year groups and use this to focus improvements.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Sackett  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, you and I visited all classes to observe teaching and learning. I looked at the work in pupils' books during my visits to the classrooms, as well as looking separately at a sample of pupils' work. I met with you, your deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, your attendance and welfare officer and the bursar. I discussed pupils' learning with your English and mathematics leaders. I also met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body and with a local authority representative.

I took account of 16 parents' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke with parents informally at the end of the school day. I also considered 20 staff responses and five pupils' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires. I talked with pupils during my visits to the classrooms and in the playtime during the lunchbreak. I reviewed the school's website and considered a range of documents, including your summary of the school's effectiveness and improvement plan. I also looked at documents about safeguarding and attendance.