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Mrs Cecilia Rigby
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Dear Mrs Rigby

Short inspection of St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 April 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 February 2014.

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 full section 5 inspection.

You are aware that addressing the recommendations of this short inspection does not predetermine the outcome of the next inspection. There continue to be other aspects of the school's work identified by leaders for improvement. Leaders should address all of these priorities successfully as part of the school's ongoing development.

You bring a calm, clear and knowledgeable vision to the work of St Teresa's. Staff morale is high, because you support teachers and teaching assistants ably in developing their skills. Staff contribute widely and positively to the life of the school.

Pupils, including the most able, learn well across subjects. For example, as the result of recent work, they talked confidently about the creativity of different artists and musicians. They enjoy lessons and a wide range of extra activities such as cricket, gardening and drama. They are proud of their school. One pupil described staff as 'polite and positive' and other pupils agreed.

Parents and carers are highly satisfied with the school. They said that you are ever-present around the school. For example, you greet them and pupils at the start and end of most school days. Parents said that you and other leaders are approachable and that you listen to them and act promptly on any concerns. Parents said that staff and leaders respond thoughtfully to the needs of individual pupils.

You and the deputy headteacher form a strong, unified team. You have different yet complementary strengths that you use skilfully to maintain the school's success. You and your leaders use the Christian ethos of the school carefully to develop pupils' confidence in praying for and loving their community.

At the previous inspection, inspectors asked the school to improve the quality of teaching. You have achieved this at the same time as appointing new staff. Staff often give pupils, including the most able, helpful challenge in activities. Leaders make sure that they and staff benefit from well-established links with other schools, sharing practice and gaining inspiration. Staff and leaders participate in research about learning, for example with universities, to improve the work of the school.

You and your leaders make full and genuine use of surveys to gather the views of parents, carers and pupils and to identify where improvement is needed. For example, pupils told you that they found geography lessons less engaging. Leaders and staff reviewed and refined the teaching of geography to make activities more varied and challenging. Pupils now read and write with confidence and skill across the curriculum.

Children at St Teresa's continue to flourish in the early years. Since the previous inspection, you have added an attractive nursery to the school. However, leaders do not make full use of published information about children's attainment to review the impact of the staff's teaching.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leadership team ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders place a high priority on making sure that pupils feel good about their lives and are protected from harm. You make full use of outside experts and national information to develop the staff's understanding of child protection. Leaders and governors have a comprehensive knowledge of the safeguarding risks to pupils in the local community. Staff plan the school curriculum to give pupils many opportunities to develop their understanding of safety, for example in how they use the internet. Leaders are unafraid to raise safeguarding concerns with other agencies and follow-up matters with fellow professionals for a full response. Staff record information about individual pupils carefully. Senior leaders review records thoroughly to help spot issues and to consider what more the school should do to keep pupils safe.

Inspection findings

- Pupils at the school attain well and make strong progress in English, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils that achieve above the standards expected

for their age is better than the national average. Pupils leave St Teresa's ready for the challenges of secondary school. This is because of high expectations from staff and parents of what pupils can achieve. Pupils believe in their own capabilities to succeed, as illustrated by the key stage 2 pupil who wanted to know more about attending university.

- Leaders have a deep and accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Gaps that arise in pupils' attainment and progress are short lived because of the rapid and skilful way in which leaders, governors and staff address weaknesses in teaching. Leaders learn from one another, as well as from experts outside the school. Your training for staff addresses the needs of individuals as well as those of the whole team. Your careful review and development of the curriculum results in pupils having access to a wide range of memorable opportunities for learning.
- Some staff do not make sure that children say the sounds that letters make correctly. This makes it more difficult for pupils to combine sounds to make words. Nevertheless, leaders and staff ensure that many other arrangements help pupils to read successfully.
- Pupils respect differences between people and communities. They understand how people who are deaf or blind overcome their disabilities to lead fulfilling lives. They know of the beliefs and traditions of people of other faiths, for example Judaism and Hinduism. Pupils know that the word 'gay' should not be used in a derogatory way. They try to improve their school and the world around them through charitable work. They are aware of significant world events, for example the work of the President of the United States and the conflict in Syria. Pupils comprehend how democracy works at a national level but they are less aware of democracy at work in their local area. However, this is a minor weakness given how much children get to know democracy in action in their school. For example, leaders consult pupils regularly and formally and use feedback to develop the school.
- In Nursery and Reception, staff help children to be active, inquisitive and cooperative through an impressive range of activities. Children make progress that is good or better. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is above the national average and improving year on year. They leave the early years ready for Year 1. Staff give children many worthwhile opportunities to become confident learners and develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills. Leaders have a clear understanding of what effective teaching, for example of phonics, looks like for young children. They make certain that their insights shape the teaching of children in Nursery and Reception. Leaders ensure that the environment in the early years is supportive of children's learning and is attractive, both indoors and outdoors. However, leaders do not make enough use of published information about children's attainment to consider whether children learn as successfully as they should.
- At the previous inspection, inspectors praised the effectiveness of the school's governing body. Over subsequent years, governors have strengthened their work further. They play an active and vital role in the ongoing success of the school. They bring their substantial skills in education, early years, finance, parenting

and safeguarding to their roles. Members know the school in detail and use their understanding precisely to challenge and support the work of staff and leaders. Governors are very clear about what the school needs to do to improve quality even further. They also take firm steps to improve the standard of their own work. Their overview of child protection and their checks on the school's culture of safeguarding are exemplary. They make sure that staff and governors have extensive scope to develop their safeguarding expertise and to learn from national and regional initiatives in child protection. Governors visit the school frequently and with a planned focus. They share and debate their insights fully with other governors at meetings.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all staff help pupils to enunciate correctly the sounds that letters make
- in the early years they use information about children's attainment precisely, to identify points for development.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Vaughan

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher to consider your evaluation of the school and your plans for the future. You and I visited classes to observe pupils' activities and to consider evidence of pupils' work in their books. I spoke with a random sample of eight pupils from key stage 2. I met with the leader for the early years. I held a meeting with 11 governors, including the chair. I met with representatives of the local authority and the archdiocese. I spoke informally with parents as they dropped their children off at school. I considered the 69 responses and 43 free-text responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View. I considered the views of 18 pupils and 21 staff given in response to Ofsted's surveys. I looked at a range of school documentation, including reviews of pupils' progress and attainment. I checked the single central record of employment checks on staff, governors and volunteers. I reviewed examples of school records of the safeguarding of pupils.