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Ms A Nicholl
Headteacher
St John of Beverley Roman Catholic Primary School, Beverley
Wilberforce Crescent
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Dear Ms Nicholl

Short inspection of St John of Beverley Roman Catholic Primary School, Beverley

Following my visit to the school on 3 October 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.

St John of Beverley Roman Catholic Primary School is a place where pupils enjoy learning. The environment is attractive and well organised and reflects the wide range of opportunities that you provide for your pupils. You and your leadership team have been reflective and have identified what needs to be done to improve, acting with a sense of urgency to make improvements. You think carefully about when to introduce new strategies and how to make sure any improvements you have made remain in place. The governing body provides effective support and challenge. They check that the information you provide is accurate, visiting the school regularly to fulfil their roles. Leaders and governors share a real passion for the school and the community and the commitment to enable all pupils to succeed is central to your work.

You have good relationships with your pupils. It was a pleasure to watch the way pupils approached you around the school to chat about their interests. Leaders and teachers know the pupils and their families well and use this to provide good pastoral care. Parents are very supportive and feel that their children are well supported and safe in school. One parent said, 'This is a fantastic school that has served my child well.' Staff appreciate the support that leaders provide. They feel confident to try things out in order to improve their teaching and are proud to be part of the school.

Following the last inspection, inspectors identified the need to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics further, including by making sure that pupils are given good opportunities to use and apply their mathematics skills and to learn their times tables thoroughly. You have worked hard to improve pupils' understanding of number and now provide regular opportunities for them to practise their basic number skills, including times tables. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils now have more opportunity to use and apply their mathematical skills and to solve problems. You think carefully about the needs of individual pupils and arrange teaching in groups to focus on their specific needs. The work you have done has improved pupils' achievement in mathematics considerably. Pupils make good progress. Attainment at the end of both key stage 1 and 2 is above average.

During the last inspection, leaders were asked to ensure that more pupils made outstanding progress across key stage 2. Leaders' success in addressing this reflects clearly in the published 2016 end of Year 6 results, which show that progress in reading, writing and mathematics was in the top 20% of schools nationally. In writing and in mathematics, these results were sustained in 2017 but pupils did not achieve as well in reading. Standards in reading fell to average. Leaders have acted swiftly and so pupils are now making better progress. However, improving pupils' achievement in reading even further remains a priority for improvement. Sometimes, pupils' progress is held back because work is not well matched to meet the specific needs of different groups of pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff place the safety and welfare of pupils as a priority. You have thorough procedures in place to ensure that all appropriate checks are made when recruiting new staff. Staff who are new to the school receive thorough induction training and this allows them to be vigilant from the day they arrive. You have revised your safeguarding policy to reflect the latest changes in guidance for safeguarding children and you have ensured that all staff and governors are aware of these changes. You provide staff with regular updates throughout the year. As a result, staff are confident when talking about what to do should they have any concerns about pupils or their colleagues.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know who to talk to should they have any concerns about their safety and are confident that any problems they have will be resolved. Pupils say that behaviour in and around the school is good and that bullying is rare. You provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn about how to stay safe, including information about how they can stay safe online. Groups such as the Junior Travel Ambassadors promote road safety through assemblies and class discussions in order to maintain pupils' awareness of how to stay safe.

Inspection findings

- Published outcomes for children in the early years indicate that, in recent years, the proportion reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception Year has been declining. In 2017, an average proportion of children achieved this

good level. Therefore, I wanted to find out what leaders have done to reverse this decline and to check whether children in the early years are making good progress from their starting points.

- Children in the early years have settled into school life quickly this year. There are well-established rules and routines in place, helping children to develop their independence and to work collaboratively with their peers. Provision is well adapted to respond to children's changing needs. The environment is well organised, allowing children to access a broad curriculum. The outdoor area encourages children to take risks, effectively enhancing the learning that takes place within the classroom.
- Leaders have taken effective action to bring about improvement. The early years leader has an excellent understanding of children's needs. She uses her assessments well to plan relevant activities, to adapt the environment and to decide how adults need to support different groups of children. Children are well taught. Adults ask questions that encourage children to extend their answers and to improve the language that they use. The basic skills that the children will need in key stage 1 are skilfully reinforced. For example, during the inspection, children's knowledge of the sounds that letters make was continually developed within a conversation about helicopters during carpet time. As a result of good provision, children make good progress. Provisional outcomes in 2018 have improved considerably.
- In Year 6 in 2017, pupils' standards of attainment in writing and mathematics were much higher than average. From their starting points, pupils made strong progress in these subjects. However, pupils' attainment in reading was broadly average. Pupils' progress in reading was much slower. For this reason, I wanted to find out what leaders have done in order to address this.
- You have acted swiftly to ensure that pupils' progress in reading is increased. You revised the approach to the teaching of reading across the school and adjusted the timetable to ensure that reading becomes a focus in lessons. Teachers are using their good subject knowledge to help pupils to develop their vocabulary. Teaching assistants are used well, supporting groups of pupils effectively by guiding them through tasks and helping them to overcome any misconceptions. Adults question pupils effectively to ensure that they use the texts they read to find evidence for their answers.
- As a result of these improvements, pupils are now making better progress in reading. Even so, when we looked at pupils' books, we found that the tasks that teachers plan in reading, and also in writing, are sometimes not matched well enough to the needs of different groups of pupils. For example, work is sometimes too easy for the most able pupils or too difficult for others, such as for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Making sure that teachers use assessment information more effectively to plan reading and writing activities that meet the specific needs of different groups of pupils remains a key priority for improvement.
- Although pupils achieve well in writing overall, across the school, the quality of pupils' presentation of their work and their handwriting varies. Sometimes, pupils do not apply their knowledge of English grammar, punctuation and spelling to

their writing well enough. You know that improving pupils' presentation of their work and their handwriting is now an area to improve further.

- I also wanted to find out how effectively leaders use the pupil premium funding to enable disadvantaged pupils to achieve as well as other pupils. This is because in recent years, by the end of Year 2, disadvantaged pupils' attainment has lagged some way behind that of other pupils in the school and nationally. Inspection evidence indicates that the attainment of disadvantaged pupils improved considerably in 2018 and that the majority of disadvantaged pupils across the school are making good progress. Even so, their progress is still not as good as that of other pupils, especially in key stage 2 in reading. Although leaders check and discuss the progress that these pupils make regularly, their plans for spending the pupil premium funding lack the necessary detail and precision to ensure that pupils receive support that is matched closely to their particular needs. Making sure that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as others is an important area for further improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers use assessment information more effectively to plan reading and writing activities that meet the specific needs of different groups of pupils
- the presentation of pupils' work and their handwriting improves, including using their knowledge of English grammar, punctuation and spelling in their written work
- plans for the spending of pupil premium funding are well matched to the needs of pupils so that disadvantaged pupils make equally good progress to others.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the diocese of Middlesbrough, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for East Riding of Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jaimie Holbrook
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met you and shared my lines of enquiry. I also met with members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, the subject leader for English and the designated safeguarding leader. I considered 36 responses of parents from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 28 free-text comments. There were 16 responses to Ofsted's questionnaires for staff and no

responses from pupils. We visited classes together in the early years and in key stages 1 and 2. I talked to pupils and observed their behaviour in lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. I viewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance and its plans for further improvement. I considered a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding, and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information.