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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Ms Emma Cashier
Headteacher
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
90 Oakhill Road
London
SW15 2QD

Dear Ms Cashier

Short inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 May 2019, 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 July 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

You and your leaders have worked hard to ensure that the school is a happy and inclusive environment. The values of the school are regularly reviewed, and influence the behaviour of the whole school community. As a result, relationships between pupils and staff are warm and supportive. As one pupil put it, 'all the staff here are kind'. Pupils are courteous and polite and behave well. They welcome visitors, and are keen to talk about their school.

Pupils are enthusiastic to learn and work hard in lessons. They understand teachers' expectations of them, and respond well. Pupils work well together and enjoy their learning. Their strong personal development contributes effectively to the progress they make.

You are determined to motivate all pupils to develop a wider knowledge of the world, and to deepen their understanding of what they are learning. This is achieved through a curriculum that is built around a series of questions. These challenge pupils to think deeply, and to justify their opinions. Pupils undertake project work alongside pupils from international schools. This helps to develop their understanding of different cultures and backgrounds. As a result, pupils have a strong sense of empathy and tolerance, which reflects the ethos of the school. Diversity is prized, and everyone is valued.

Leaders and governors know the school well. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to improve. As a result, you prioritise the right areas, and your efforts are leading to improvements. However, pupils' progress is sometimes uneven.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff training is up to date and reviewed regularly so that staff are supported well to understand current statutory guidance. Information is shared at briefings to ensure that all staff are aware of ongoing issues. Staff know how to raise any concerns they have about pupils' welfare, using the school's online system. Safeguarding records are suitably detailed and well maintained. This demonstrates that concerns are swiftly followed up. Partnership work with outside agencies is effective in supporting vulnerable pupils.

The single central record is maintained to a high standard. Leaders carry out pre-employment checks in accordance with requirements. These checks are recorded accurately, and are checked by leaders and governors.

Pupils said that they feel safe in school. Parents and staff who answered Ofsted's online questionnaire unanimously agree. Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including online bullying. They said that, although it is rare, if it does happen, they know they can report it to a member of staff. They were confident that it would be dealt with quickly. Pupils are taught how to stay safe in a variety of situations. Consequently, they know how to make sensible choices and stay safe when out of school.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the day, we agreed key areas of focus for this inspection. The first was to explore how successfully leaders support teachers at key stage 2 to improve disadvantaged pupils' outcomes in reading. This is because, in recent years, attainment at the expected standard and at greater depth was lower than for other pupils nationally.
- You and your leaders have implemented a variety of actions to secure improvements in reading for these pupils. These include focused sessions to develop pupils' vocabulary so that they can infer and deduce the meaning of a text. You have introduced new books to stimulate pupils' interest in reading. As a result, disadvantaged pupils enjoy reading more than they used to.
- Pupils I heard read, including disadvantaged pupils, read with fluency and expression. They develop a love of books. For example, a pupil said, 'I love books by David Walliams because he knows what makes children laugh.' If they came across a word they did not know, most were able to work out its meaning from the context. However, the progress of some disadvantaged pupils is limited because they find some words more difficult to read and understand than their peers do.

- Although outcomes in reading are improving, progress is uneven across key stage 2. Assessment information supports this. This remains a priority for the school.
- Next, we considered how successfully leaders promote pupils' achievement from middle and high starting points in mathematics. This is because, in the past, middle-ability and most-able pupils made less progress than they should.
- Leaders have a clear approach to pupils' progress. They ensure that equal time is given to develop pupils' fluency, reasoning and problem solving. This challenges the majority of pupils well. Work is sequenced to enable pupils to build on prior learning, which prepares them to tackle more demanding calculations.
- Most pupils are able to articulate their learning and know how to solve problems in different contexts. However, within key stage 2, some pupils are not routinely challenged, and spend time on basic calculations. This limits their progress.
- Finally, we considered how successful the school had been in reducing rates of persistent absence for all groups of pupils. This is because, in the past, persistent absence for all groups was higher than the national average.
- You and your staff have worked hard to ensure that everyone in the school community understands the importance of regular attendance. You give parents and carers regular and clear information about the importance of regular attendance. Improvements in attendance have been celebrated through assemblies and through a variety of rewards, including cups and prizes. There are strong systems in place to track persistent absence, which is monitored closely. When attendance does not improve, you work closely with external agencies. As a result, persistent absence for all groups has improved and is now below national averages.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- rates of progress in reading for disadvantaged pupils increase from different starting points, so that attainment reaches the average for their ages
- more pupils achieve greater depth in mathematics by ensuring routine challenge in lessons.

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

Yours sincerely

David Lloyd
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held meetings with you, your deputy headteacher and the inclusion lead, and I met with two governors. I visited lessons with you and the deputy headteacher, reviewed books, and considered assessment information and documentation about attendance. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school and at playtime, and talked informally to a group of pupils. I talked with a range of staff, and evaluated documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, the single central record and other safeguarding procedures and practices. I considered the staff questionnaire, and 24 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.