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Mrs Michaela Mouquet
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Dear Mrs Mouquet

Short inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 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 November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Since your appointment, you have worked with clarity of purpose, strengthening the school's partnership with the local authority and increasing the pace of development of middle leadership. You have ensured that teaching has become more consistent in sustaining the good progress of pupils with a wide range of abilities in reading, writing and mathematics.

The areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been tackled effectively. Your focus on sharpening middle leaders' and teachers' use of assessment information is paying off. Leaders have accurately identified training priorities for teachers. For example, following additional training, teachers are now more effective in developing pupils' abilities to understand the meaning of books they read. In the early years, improvements in the consistency of teaching have ensured that weaknesses noticed at the last inspection have been tackled well. As a result, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has been above the national average for the past three years. Pupils build on their good progress in phonics in Year 1, with a higher proportion reaching the expected standard than that found nationally. Disadvantaged pupils attain as well in reading as other pupils nationally.

Senior leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. They also know where challenges remain. For example, they understand the need to increase the involvement of parents and carers by giving them confidence in hearing and talking about

reading at home. They also realise that the pupils who have been reluctant to come to school must sustain the recent rapid improvements they are making in their attendance.

Your work to ensure that pupils make good progress in writing has been effective. Pupils made better progress in writing in key stage 2 in 2016 than was found nationally. You spent additional funding wisely to ensure that disadvantaged pupils made similar progress in writing to other pupils nationally. However, you recognise that there is variability in the quality and range of pupils' writing in subjects other than English.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. You maintain thorough, well-organised checks on staff; and governors keep a close eye on their continued good quality. Senior leaders and governors conduct regular checks on how well members of staff understand the safeguarding policy and changes to safeguarding guidance. When concerns are referred to the professionals outside school, these are followed up, recorded and acted on swiftly.

Pupils who spoke with me said they feel safe. They praised the adults for picking up on minor concerns quickly, 'before they become big problems'. They understand the school's anti-bullying strategy and can explain how different types of bullying occur. Leaders and governors have strengthened the curriculum in light of their training in relation to the 'Prevent' duty. The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey agreed that their children are safe and well looked after. Your own recent survey of parents' views indicates an even more positive view of safeguarding.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection we decided to focus on the current progress of pupils in reading, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. In 2016, the proportion of the most able pupils in key stage 1 attaining a high standard was lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard by the end of key stage 2 in reading was in line with the national average. However, pupils' progress in reading was not as strong as in writing, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils are now making more rapid progress in reading from their different starting points. Teachers are providing skilful support based on accurate assessments to help pupils deepen their understanding of the books they are reading. Teachers organise and display books in an inviting manner. Leaders provide guidance to help parents make the most of the time they spend sharing books with their children at home. Less-able readers in key stage 1 use their phonics skills to persevere in tackling unfamiliar words, and enjoy reading more as a result. The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are making more rapid progress in understanding new vocabulary and explaining the plot of stories. Leaders are closely monitoring the progress of disadvantaged pupils and ensuring that additional support is effective in helping them to catch up if they begin to fall behind.
- We also decided to look at the current progress of pupils in writing across the whole school. The teaching of writing was identified as a weaker area in the school's previous

inspection. Although in 2016 Year 6 pupils' progress was more rapid than that found nationally, assessment information shows some variation in the rates of progress of different groups in other parts of the school.

- Children in the early years and pupils throughout the school are now making consistently rapid progress. When you identified that some older children were not sustaining good progress over time, you took prompt action to help them pick up their pace of learning. Pupils' book show the impact of these actions. For example, comparison of pieces of pupils' work in the same genre show improvements in specific respects.
- Pupils understand each part of the writing process and can explain how they are improving their grammar and punctuation. However, the writing I saw in pupils' books in different subjects was more variable in quality in some classes. Some pupils are not writing to the same standard across other subjects as in their English lessons.
- Finally, we focused on the action taken by the school to improve attendance. You have worked closely with your governors and the local authority to make the school's expectations for pupils' attendance clear to parents and pupils. Pupils with higher rates of absence are closely monitored and you have demonstrated that you are willing to take firm action to uphold the school's attendance policy when necessary. At the same time, your leadership team offers a wide range of advice and encouragement to help pupils and parents overcome barriers to improving attendance. As a result, the attendance of nearly all those pupils who have been persistently absent is improving quickly. However, you recognise that there is a small proportion of pupils whose attendance remains a concern and that further action is required to sustain recent improvements.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance of those pupils who are persistently absent from school continues to improve rapidly
- teachers make sure that pupils consistently write to the same good standard in other subjects as they do in English.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Wright
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held discussions with senior leaders and those responsible for safeguarding. I held discussions with leaders responsible for monitoring the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. I met with members of the governing body and held discussions with a representative of the local authority. I visited classes in each key stage with school leaders, talking to pupils about their work and looking at their books. I heard pupils read and talked with them about other aspects of the school, including safeguarding arrangements. I scrutinised a range of documents and the school's checks on the suitability of staff. I took into account 19 responses to the online Parent View survey, including a number of written responses from parents. I also looked at the outcomes of the school's recent survey of parents' views.