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Mr Nick Bracey
Headteacher
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School
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Dear Mr Bracey

Short inspection of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 February 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Our Lady of Lourdes is a thriving school. Current leaders have established a culture of high aspirations. All staff report that they are proud to work in the school. The majority of pupils are diligent and display exemplary attitudes to learning. Parents and carers report their growing confidence in the school.

For a short while, the school experienced some turbulent times. All senior leaders and teachers left the school within just over a year. Governors have been persistent in their pursuit of improvement. They have not shied away from difficult decisions. Governors have been fully supported by diocesan and local authority officers in securing a national leader of education (NLE) to lead the school. Partnerships with local teaching schools and specialist teachers have further strengthened the school's work. For example, outcomes in phonics and writing are much improved.

You became headteacher in January 2018. You have already gained an acute understanding of the strengths of the school and of the areas that require further work. You are working determinedly on the right aspects for improvement. Parents speak highly of your work and welcome your appointment.

The NLE has led the school with a relentless ambition for high standards. In doing so, she has shaped a like-minded team which shows great tenacity in ensuring that pupils achieve well and enjoy school. You continue to work closely with the NLE and, together, you are driving forward further improvements. Overall, pupils'

attendance is good and in line with the national average. The number of pupils who are persistently absent is much lower than previously.

Leaders' work to redesign the school's curriculum has had a positive impact on raising standards. Pupils' progress, where it was not fast enough, has begun to improve. More pupils are working at the expected standards for their age. In 2016, the number of pupils reaching the combined expected standard by the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics plummeted to 24%, well below the national average. In the national assessments in 2017, pupils' achievement increased rapidly so that it was above the national average.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Following the upheaval of so many staff changes, governors engaged the support of the local authority to carry out a rigorous, no-notice review of safeguarding measures in the school. The NLE, together with new leaders, has tackled shortcomings swiftly. Governors continue to make thorough checks to assure themselves that staff have a clear understanding of safeguarding procedures and use them appropriately. In addition, governors make regular checks to ensure that the single central record is up to date and kept in line with current legislation.

Training for safeguarding and child protection is up to date, enabling staff and governors to discharge their duties fully. Senior leaders have ensured that staff are competent in using the new systems for recording concerns. Records are kept meticulously. Leaders work closely with external agencies to assure themselves that everything is being done to minimise risk. They demonstrate great tenacity in making sure that pupils and their families receive the support they need.

Pupils are confident that their concerns are followed up quickly by staff. They say that they feel safe in school and eagerly describe the many ways in which the school's curriculum helps them to understand how to stay safe in a range of situations. Parents agree. Every parent who responded to the online questionnaire Parent View responded that their child is safe in school.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry focused on the effectiveness of the teaching of phonics and reading across the early years and key stage 1. This is because, in 2017, the number of pupils who met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening checks fell below the national average. In addition, too few boys made good progress to achieve expected standards in reading at the end of key stage 1. This did not represent good progress from pupils' different starting points. Senior leaders have worked resolutely to tackle this weakness.
- The teaching of phonics is increasingly effective. Pupils apply their phonic knowledge to read and spell with increasing accuracy. In addition, initiatives to improve pupils' understanding of the texts they read have been successful in raising standards in reading. Teachers and accomplished teaching assistants are helping pupils to catch up.

- Leaders have reviewed the reading resources to ensure that all genres include interesting reading material for all readers and, in particular, boys. Outcomes of current pupils show that their acquisition of phonics is strong. A large number of pupils have met the expected standard determined in last year's phonics check. In addition, a greater proportion of pupils than last year are on track to reach the expected standards in reading by the end of key stage 2. However, you recognise that there is more to do to ensure that lessons, all reading materials and support sessions are better aligned so that pupils' progress accelerates. This applies, in particular, to a small group of boys in key stage 1.
- Second, we explored the effectiveness of the teaching of writing in key stage 2 and, in particular, for previously mid- and high-prior-attaining pupils and for those who are disadvantaged. This was because, historically, too few pupils achieved the higher standard in writing. Leaders have worked effectively to remedy this weakness. Improving the quality of writing in key stage 2, in particular, has been a school priority and the quality of writing is now a strength.
- The highly effective teaching of English, grammar, punctuation and spelling has led to pupils writing accurately and to good effect. Pupils are diligent in working together and editing their own work against clear success criteria. Consequently, an increased proportion of pupils are on track to achieve the higher standards this year. Your team is not complacent. You have rightly identified that there are pockets of strong practice in the school, where teachers are adept at encouraging pupils to apply their literacy skills to write creatively across all subjects.
- Although numbers are few, leaders and governors focused sharply on improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils this year. In most cases, the additional support they receive is leading to disadvantaged pupils making accelerated progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the progress of the weakest readers in key stage 1 is accelerated, through a coordinated approach to whole-class and support sessions
- the best practice in writing is shared across the school so that pupils develop their creativity in writing across the curriculum and more achieve the higher standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracy Hannon
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the executive headteacher. I also met with members of the governing body, and the writing and reading leaders. I considered the 24 responses of parents to Ofsted's online survey Parent View and all free-text comments. I scrutinised the 19 responses to Ofsted's questionnaires for staff and the 41 responses to the pupil questionnaire. We visited classes together throughout the school and I looked at samples of pupils' work with you. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and met with a large group of them at lunchtime. I viewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance and their plans for further improvement. I considered a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding. I heard a number of pupils read.