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Mrs M Williams
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Williams

Short inspection of The Good Shepherd Catholic Primary, Arnold

Following my visit to the school on 18 September 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Parents and carers value the work of the school. They are actively encouraged to play an active role in their children's learning. Pupils told me that they are happy to come to school and they are appreciative of the range of clubs, visits and visitors planned to encourage their interest. They explained the importance of kindness and respect, which the school holds at the heart of its values. They appreciate how learning about other faiths and cultures broadens their understanding of the wider world. They understand and appreciate diversity. One pupil said, 'We believe we know enough and have friends of mixed faiths...what matters is us as people.'

Pupils are confident, polite and articulate. They speak enthusiastically about their involvement in raising funds for local, national and international charities. They are proud of the different roles and responsibilities they take on to support the smooth running of the school, such as recently raising funds to purchase and install a trim trail for pupils to enjoy at playtimes.

Pupils are motivated learners. They told me that they enjoy the opportunity to challenge themselves. Teachers provide displays which support pupils' learning effectively. In classrooms and around the school, pupils' work is celebrated and presented to a high standard.

You work closely with the team of middle leaders to continue to improve the school. You are developing the staff and leadership teams well through professional development. You have an enthusiastic and committed staff. You work well with local schools to share good practice.

Since the last inspection, you have identified key areas requiring further improvement. You have ensured that staff have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons and over time. You have introduced an effective tracking system and leaders check progress, through regular meetings, so they can improve the quality of teaching. Leaders of mathematics and English are relatively new to post and, while they are checking the impact of initiatives they have introduced, very occasionally this is not done precisely enough to make sure that it is consistent across the school. For example, we noted that in some classes teachers were not designing tasks with sufficient challenge to ensure that the most able pupils make the progress of which they are capable in mathematics and reading.

In order to improve teaching and learning, you have successfully introduced a bespoke approach to teaching phonics and reading to develop pupils' skills in deeper analysis of texts. You have also introduced an approach to teaching mathematics in key stages 1 and 2 to develop pupils' reasoning skills. These recent refinements are not fully embedded.

The local governing body provides effective support to the school. Governors are enthusiastic and highly motivated to ensure that the school continues to improve. They have an action plan in place which links to the school's development plan. This enables governors to focus their visits to check on the school's work in meeting its priorities. On 1 September 2018, the school became a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and, consequently, the organisation of the governing body changed. The governing body has ensured that governors are well trained and receive professional development for their role. Governors have a thorough understanding of their new roles and responsibilities.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You are diligent and tenacious in your approach to safeguarding. High-quality, detailed records show that you manage concerns swiftly and understand the procedures for referring pupils to other agencies where there is concern. You manage complex cases with competence. You use your breadth of knowledge well to engage a range of external support to meet pupils' needs. Staff and governors are well trained.

Leaders, including members of the governing body, maintain a robust safeguarding culture across the school. Staff receive timely and up-to-date training in child protection. They are knowledgeable about their responsibilities. They are vigilant and confident to report if they have a concern that a pupil may be at risk.

The office manager ensures that all the appropriate checks on staff, volunteers and visitors are made to support the safety of the school and the pupils and to meet

statutory requirements. Your record-keeping is well organised and records are kept securely. Members of the governing body make thorough checks on all safeguarding practices. Policies are reviewed and updated appropriately.

Most parents spoken with, and most of those who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children are happy to come to school and feel secure. Pupils feel safe and receive regular reminders about keeping safe online. They know how the school keeps them safe and were appreciative of their recent experiences of a 'lock-down' procedure practice and a fire drill. They welcome visitors to support the work of the school such as police, fire service and the RNLI. Themed weeks help pupils learn about anti-bullying. They report that there is very little poor behaviour and that any disputes that do arise are sorted out quickly. Pupils develop tolerant and respectful relationships with each other and adults that support their personal and academic development equally well.

Inspection findings

- Recently, you introduced a system for teachers to assess pupils' attainment and progress at key points through the year. You and the leadership team have wasted no time in evaluating current provision and implementing strategies to bring about improvement. Your latest assessments show that the majority of pupils are achieving standards at least in line with expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You and other leaders have introduced a bespoke approach to the teaching of reading across the school. You recognised that the proportion of pupils working at greater depth in reading at key stage 1 and the proportion of the most able pupils working at the higher standard at key stage 2 were below the national average in 2017. You are determined that the approach taken to teaching reading will help pupils develop and refine skills in analysing texts and answering questions.
- To improve pupils' reading skills, you have made improvements to the library and to the book stock that include a range of interesting and challenging books for pupils to practise their phonic skills. You have improved pupils' access to good-quality texts to refine comprehension skills. You have introduced a reading shed in the Reception class to stimulate language development. The school's assessment shows that for many pupils across the school, progress is equally as strong in reading as it is in writing.
- You have introduced a new programme to help adults to track and assess pupils' progress in phonics. Our observations showed that when phonics is taught effectively, adults use a range of resources to help pupils learn letter sounds proficiently. In a few instances, teachers do not insist that pupils apply and build on their phonics and spelling skills in reading and writing.
- During the inspection, we looked at pupils' work in books and on display. In key stage 2, pupils write regularly and at length. You are developing the curriculum to increase the opportunity for pupils to engage in exciting writing tasks. However, subject leaders do not check well enough that teachers use their knowledge of what pupils know in order to plan the next steps in learning. In a

key stage 1 class, some pupils were limiting their recorded responses to individual illustrations rather than improving their writing by using the more appropriate grammar, punctuation and vocabulary of which they were capable.

- You and other leaders are refining a recently introduced bespoke approach to the teaching of mathematics, with the development of a systematic approach to reasoning and problem-solving at its heart. This has boosted teachers' confidence and skills in teaching the curriculum. This new way of teaching is in the early stages of development and is not securely in place across the school. Pupils enjoy mathematics lessons, although some report that, on occasions, the work is too easy. When the level of challenge is appropriate, pupils think critically and creatively when solving problems.
- Discussions with subject leaders highlighted that they need more time to develop further their skills to use information effectively from their monitoring activities. The school is improving its assessment system to ensure that it provides relevant progress information for teachers and leaders.
- The school is vigilant in monitoring pupils' absence and has been successful in improving overall attendance and in reducing the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent. Published information shows that attendance is above the national average. Leaders are effective in ensuring that attendance continues to improve.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they improve pupils' progress in English and mathematics, by making sure that the new methods of teaching these subjects become established across school and are effective
- subject leaders develop their skills further in leading and checking improvements in their subjects.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Nottingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Nottinghamshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Moore
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you to discuss the school's self-evaluation and my lines of enquiry. I met with a foundation governor, the chair of the local governing body and the chief executive officer of the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. I met with leaders responsible for English, mathematics, special educational needs, pupil premium and assessment. I spoke with pupils during a group discussion and informally during lessons. I observed pupils' conduct around and outside the school. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day. Jointly, you and I visited a range of classes to observe learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. In addition, I checked the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the school's record of recruitment checks on staff. I looked at a sample of recruitment files. I evaluated the school's documentation about pupils' achievement and attendance and looked at school improvement plans. I took account of the 92 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, the 15 responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and the 72 responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.