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Mrs L Prestidge
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Prestidge

Short inspection of St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 June 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

The school has undergone a number of changes in the last five years, including a change of leadership and some new staff. Since becoming headteacher of the school in September 2015, you have secured the necessary improvements to ensure that St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School remains an engaging, purposeful place in which to learn, and where the education provided is underpinned by its distinctive Catholic ethos.

Your vision and passion for improving the learning experiences of every individual are very evident. You have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Consequently, you have clearly focused on the correct priorities and are taking effective action to address areas of weakness. An example of this is the improvements you have made to the provision for reading, following the dip in the progress made by higher-attaining pupils in 2017. These improvements have had a clear impact on the development of all pupils' reading skills and, as a result, progress in reading is accelerating.

The early years leads the way in ensuring that children get off to a strong start. Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are generally in line with those expected for their age. The language-rich environment and excellent support from adults ensure that children quickly develop the necessary learning skills to ensure

that they are able to progress well. The majority of children achieve a good level of development by the time they reach the end of their Reception Year and are very well prepared for the challenges of key stage 1.

The school is rightly proud of its Catholic ethos. The school achieves its vision to ensure that all pupils are supported to reach their full potential 'in an atmosphere of stability, care and respect'. Staff and pupils are happy and proud of their school. During the inspection, pupils were enthusiastic about sharing their learning with us when we visited their classrooms and confidently explained what they were learning. Pupils throughout the school show positive attitudes to their learning. They are extremely polite and well mannered, and their conduct around the school is excellent.

You have addressed the areas for development from the previous inspection well. You have ensured that the majority of teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and that pupils are given opportunities for active learning. We saw clear examples of this in pupils' books and during our observations in the classrooms. These raised expectations have resulted in improved progress. However, you recognise that more still needs to be done to ensure that this improved practice is consistent across all year groups.

You have also appropriately given priority to the teaching of reading. The focus on the teaching of phonics, teachers' questioning skills and encouraging pupils to read for pleasure has contributed to more pupils reaching the standards of which they are capable. The pupils speak highly of the opportunities they have to read in the school and at the public library. One pupil said: 'I love guided reading because it helps me understand the text even better.'

However, you are not complacent. Based on your analysis of the school's performance in the national tests, you have identified what needs to be done to ensure that the school keeps on improving. You have correctly identified curriculum coverage, including challenge for the most able pupils, teaching and outcomes in reading and mathematics, in particular for girls, as well as the progress and attendance of disadvantaged pupils, as key priorities.

You work hard to develop good relationships with parents and carers, providing pastoral care and support where necessary. The majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire are very supportive of and complimentary about the school. They particularly value the commitment shown by the staff and the school's caring ethos. One parent wrote: 'The children respect the staff and therefore work harder for them.' A few parents described isolated incidents where they felt the communication with the school had not been very helpful and could be improved.

You and your team have worked hard to provide pupils with a broad, balanced and rich curriculum. You ensure that pupils are exposed to a wide range of educational experiences, including sports, music, art, drama and dance. You have ensured that the curriculum meets the needs of your pupils well and could be further enhanced by ensuring that the pupils apply their skills and knowledge to new contexts.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils' safety and well-being are the first priority of all the adults who work in the school. No concern is too small to be taken seriously. Every incident is logged quickly, considered carefully and followed through meticulously.

You have established a strong safeguarding culture and staff and governors have undertaken appropriate, up-to-date training. All staff and governors are knowledgeable about the procedures for keeping children safe and recognise that they have a collective responsibility to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for. Parents agree that their children are safe in school and pupils say that they feel safe. As the school's designated safeguarding lead, you support vulnerable pupils and their families well and access support and advice from external agencies in a timely way.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe from a range of potential dangers, including cyber bullying and when using the internet. Pupils trust that their teachers will take swift action to resolve any concerns they might have. One of the older pupils explained that she valued the support she had received, and in preparation for moving to a large secondary school, she said: 'I would like help to manage disagreements and difficulties for myself.'

Inspection findings

- The roles and responsibilities within the wider senior leadership team have been reviewed and are focused on improving the curriculum and ensuring good-quality teaching, learning and assessment across the school. Consequently, this team is effective at supporting your drive and commitment to ensuring that the school continues to improve. You are effectively developing the skills of your middle leaders to enable them to assume greater responsibility and work more independently.
- The results in last year's national assessments for Year 2 and Year 6 were above the national average. Evidence from this inspection shows that the pupils in all year groups attain the standards expected for their age.
- In the past, some disadvantaged pupils and higher-attaining pupils did not make the progress they should have. This year, you have analysed the reasons for this and quickly made improvements. These improvements have resulted in more pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, making good progress towards meeting, and in many cases exceeding, the outcomes expected for their age. Your assessment information shows that the percentage of pupils working at greater depth in reading and mathematics has increased significantly in almost all year groups. However, you acknowledge that a greater proportion of the older pupils could achieve the higher standards in reading. You and your leadership team are continuing to implement changes to the reading curriculum to ensure that more pupils achieve the higher standards.

- You have a very clear rationale for the curriculum. You ensure that you provide pupils with a wide range of experiences during their time at the school. You ensure that the curriculum is matched to the needs of the pupils by taking every opportunity to include practical tasks. Your current focus is to ensure that pupils tackle challenging tasks across the curriculum. The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is an important part of the curriculum.
- During the inspection, observations of teaching and learning were carried out in nearly all classes. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrated highly positive attitudes to their learning. Reception children were all actively engaged in making sure they were fair when sharing the fruit and other items of food. In Year 2, pupils were clearly enjoying learning how to solve problems involving subtraction. In Year 5, pupils were confidently grappling with writing poetry, demonstrating resilience and a determination to succeed. Teaching observed was very effective at ensuring that pupils strengthened their understanding and developed their problem-solving skills. Work in pupils' books demonstrates good progress over time and reflects the pride that pupils take in their work.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the challenge for all pupils, in particular the most able pupils, is consistent across all classes so that they are supported to apply their knowledge and skills across a range of subjects, particularly reading, and contexts
- they continue to improve provision for disadvantaged pupils so that they can make rapid and accelerated progress towards achieving the standards of which they are capable
- communication with parents is further strengthened.

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

Yours sincerely

Jo Lakey
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection was carried out by one inspector over one day. The inspector met with senior leaders to review the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. At this meeting we agreed several lines of enquiry to ascertain the extent to which the school was maintaining a good standard of education.

The inspector conducted learning walks throughout the school with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, reviewing work in pupils' books, speaking to pupils and observing learning. The inspector spoke with two different groups of pupils from Years 2 and 6. A scrutiny of pupils' books across the school was carried out and a meeting was held with leaders to discuss the curriculum, assessment and attendance information. The inspector also met with representatives from the school's governing body and spoke with the local authority representative on the telephone.

A range of safeguarding checks were carried out, including a review of the school's single central record and the steps followed when recruiting new members of staff. A meeting was held with the designated safeguarding lead and the special educational needs coordinator to discuss work with external agencies and how the school supports vulnerable children and their families.

The inspector took account of 46 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 29 free-text responses and one call made directly to Ofsted. The inspector also took account of 16 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 64 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.