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12 November 2018

Mrs Kate Connelly
Headteacher
Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School
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Dear Mrs Connelly

Short inspection of Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 31 October 2018 with Bianka Zemke, Her Majesty's Inspector, 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. Aspects of leadership and management have been further developed and the good outcomes for pupils identified at the last inspection have been built upon.

Since the last inspection the structure of the leadership team has changed. It now includes a deputy headteacher and one assistant headteacher. There have been changes in the teaching staff, including the recruitment of a newly qualified teacher in September 2018. A new chair of the governing body was appointed two years ago and a new governor took on the role of vice chair at the start of this academic year.

Leadership is a key strength of the school. You and your staff demonstrate an unflinching commitment to providing the best education for each individual child. Leaders have an exceptionally well-developed understanding of every aspect of school performance. You and other senior leaders are highly reflective and constantly seek ways to improve the learning journey of every child. You take a systematic approach to any development or change. Careful thought is given to the impact on pupils. You make regular checks to ensure that pupils benefit from the actions taken. As a result of your strong, strategic leadership, the school continues to go from strength to strength.

Over time you have developed a close-knit, well-trained staff team. Rigorous

performance standards underpin everything at the school. You ensure that staff have opportunities for professional and personal development. You provide access to high-quality training. You have high expectations of staff but also provide unequivocal support for them. Staff well-being is regarded as vital if pupils are to flourish. Staff value the trust you place in them and are deeply committed to the strong, shared vision. You strive to ensure that exceptional relationships exist across the whole school community.

At the last inspection, you were asked to strengthen leadership and management by developing the roles of subject leaders. Middle leaders are effective in developing the quality of teaching and provision in their subject areas. They have a comprehensive overview of how their subjects are performing. They carefully analyse pupils' outcomes and know where further action needs to be taken. They share their good practice with each other and with local schools. Middle leaders have developed the leadership skills to carry out their roles effectively. They are instrumental in ensuring the rise in standards, particularly in writing and mathematics. Your approach to succession planning is carefully considered and robust. You are passionate about developing future leaders to ensure the continued success of the school. As a result, leadership at all levels is now extremely strong.

The quality of teaching has continued to improve since the last inspection. It is securely good. Outcomes for pupils have risen significantly as a result of the improved teaching. Across the school there are examples of extremely strong and highly effective practice. However, not all staff are at this high standard and would benefit from more opportunities to learn from others. Staff plan interesting and engaging work for all pupils.

You have high aspirations and great ambition for your pupils. You help them develop a love of learning as well as a sense of love for each other. They have well developed learning behaviours because these are modelled and encouraged by all staff. Pupils are keen to share what they know. For example, during the lunch break Year 5 pupils enthused about their science work, sharing information and knowledge. Behaviour is excellent and manners exemplary. Pupils cooperate well and support one another in lessons. They are proud of their school and have a deep sense of belonging.

As a result of regular school visits, tightly focused meetings and comprehensive reports from school leaders, governors know the school very well. Their business-like approach ensures that their work remains focused on school development and improving outcomes for pupils. They make excellent use of their wealth of skills, knowledge and expertise. This enables all governors to challenge leaders and provide timely support. Governors are highly committed to the school and work purposefully to ensure the well-being of all staff and pupils.

Parents and carers value the work you do with their children. Parents are confident in knowing staff are available to talk to and willing to listen to any worries they may have. Ninety-six per cent of parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire would recommend the school. One parent shared thoughts about her son and the school,

saying, 'His eagerness to learn tells me the teachers are doing a great job.'

Safeguarding is effective.

There is an extremely strong safeguarding culture across the whole school. Leaders and governors are unapologetic that keeping children safe is central to their work. All staff are highly trained. When necessary, staff take decisive action and follow all appropriate procedures. Excellent communication and purposeful action ensure that children are safe.

Staff know their children and families well and act swiftly to provide support as and when it is needed. Parents are appreciative of the support they receive. Leaders have an excellent understanding of the issues facing the community. They work constantly and effectively to ensure that children are safe from issues such as gang-related crime, knife violence and radicalisation. The headteacher works with a range of external agencies, including the police and local authority, to further improve safety in the local community.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe through a protective behaviours programme. They know who to talk to if they are worried about an issue. Pupils describe school as a 'safe and happy place', with a child stating, 'When I am not at home this is my family.' All parents are unequivocal in saying their children are safe at school.

Inspection findings

- Many children start school with skills and knowledge below those which are typical for their age. Inspectors wanted to explore the effectiveness of the early years foundation stage in helping all children make good progress from their starting points. The learning environment is carefully planned to stimulate and engage young children. It supports their learning effectively. Adults are skilled in encouraging children to be independent and resilient. They ask questions and use children's natural curiosity as a springboard for further learning. Adults help children make links with what they already know. As a result, outcomes at the end of Reception have improved over time and are now in line with national figures.
- Assessment on entry is thorough. Adults check what children know and can do. They use the information well to provide appropriate support for those children who struggle. Immediate support is given to any individual or group of children at risk of falling behind. Children develop the confidence to use their vocabulary to explain what they are doing. This targeted support helps groups of children make better progress.
- A robust cycle of assessment is well established across the school. It is used effectively to identify the most able pupils. Leaders scrutinise pupils' progress with teachers to ensure that those not making sufficient progress receive targeted support. New books have been purchased, offering greater challenge for the most able pupils. Pupils' reading is regularly checked, and teachers ensure that books are matched to their ability. Small-group work with an adult enables

pupils to read fluently, with appropriate intonation. Pupils discuss their books in detail and make inferences about the texts. Training for staff supports the focus on vocabulary development. Leaders are tenacious in following up key actions taken to support pupils. As a result, more pupils are reaching the higher standards in reading of which they are capable.

- This consistent approach to school improvement has been instrumental in improving outcomes in mathematics. The development of mathematical skills and understanding has been a focus for development since the last inspection. The subject leader is highly influential in leading this work. Regular opportunities to practise basic skills enable pupils to quickly secure their knowledge of number facts. Regular discussions with the subject leader support teachers in planning appropriate work for pupils. Consequently, pupils' knowledge and skills in arithmetic are now well developed.
- Leaders take a strategic approach to further develop mathematical skills, especially in problem-solving. This is a high priority across the school. As a result of quality training, staff have the skills and knowledge to teach the mathematics curriculum. Adults are skilled in asking questions to check what pupils know and can do. They ask pupils to explain and prove their answers. Many teachers are highly skilled in ensuring an appropriate match of work to pupils' needs and abilities. Where this happens, pupils make stronger progress. However, not all teaching makes enough use of what pupils understand and can do to plan work that helps them with their learning. Additional resources are used well to support pupils in developing a secure understanding of a range of mathematical concepts. Staff are excited to be working as part of a local mathematics hub. They work with other schools to learn from best practice. This is resulting in more pupils reaching higher standards.
- Writing has improved over the last three years from a very low base and is now in line with national averages. This is testament to the drive from leaders to improve outcomes for pupils. Writing skills are developed through a range of strategies, including a focus on time to talk and vocabulary development. This is linked successfully with work in reading. Effective modelling before pupils begin to work independently helps them know what to do to be successful. Expectations are now higher in terms of the range of writing undertaken and in the quality of pupils' writing. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in writing at the end of key stage 2 has risen from 52% in 2016 to 80% in 2018. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in writing, however, remains below that in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' books show extensive writing across a range of subjects including science, religious education and topic work. The same high standards are expected in terms of spelling, punctuation and grammar. When talking to inspectors, pupils know exactly what to do next to improve the accuracy of their writing. They talk about the word choices and how to make their writing interesting. Pupils are rightly proud of work in their books.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the pitch and match of work to pupils' abilities is further refined so that more pupils can reach the high standards of which they are capable
- the strong practice in the school is shared to further increase the proportion of outstanding teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Nicola Harwood
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors held discussions with you and other leaders about the significant changes to the school since the last inspection, the school's self-evaluation and areas for further development. The key lines of enquiry were shared with you. We discussed information about children's current progress and attainment. An inspector met with two members of the governing body, including the chair. Meetings were held with a group of staff and with a group of pupils. The 19 responses to the staff questionnaire were considered by inspectors. Inspectors carried out learning walks with senior leaders. An inspector met with parents before school started and considered the 23 responses to Ofsted's Parent View and text service. Conversations were held with a representative from the local authority and a representative from the diocesan education service over the telephone. Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, monitoring and training records and documents relating to the school's arrangements for keeping children safe.