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6 June 2017

Ms Moya Richardson
Headteacher
Our Lady Roman Catholic Primary School
Pratt Street
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Dear Ms Richardson

Short inspection of Our Lady Roman Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

You have continued to make sure that all members of staff put pupils' welfare and their personal development at the heart of the school's work. Equally, through a comprehensive programme of training, monitoring and feedback, the quality of teaching is consistently good and increasingly outstanding. As a result, pupils thrive socially, and make good and sometimes rapid progress from their starting points.

Leaders are quick to identify any weaknesses and act swiftly to make improvements. Since the previous inspection, leaders have formed a collaborative partnership with three other primary schools. They organise joint training programmes, sharing of resources, and opportunities for teachers to moderate each other's work and to share best practice. This arrangement is highly beneficial to the school. Standards in mathematics across the year groups have gone up. There has been a three-year upward trend in the proportions of children leaving Reception and entering Year 1 with a good level of development, and those reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. In 2016, Year 2 outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics were good.

This year, you correctly prioritised improving key stage 2 pupils' reading skills, diminishing differences between disadvantaged and other pupils and continuing your work to increase rates of attendance.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of vigilance in the school. Leaders make sure that they train all members of staff and regularly update them with the latest guidance. Additionally, all members of the governing body have attended safeguarding and safer recruitment training.

There is a very open and supportive ethos in the school. This means that not only do members of staff report even the slightest concern that they may have, but pupils and parents feel confident to approach school leaders to report anything untoward.

Safeguarding leaders always investigate thoroughly all potential safeguarding and welfare issues. They work very closely with parents and a range of external agencies to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Equally, they actively support families whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Leaders make sure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, such as when using the internet. In addition, leaders provide much useful information to parents on the school's website about how they can support their children's safety online, for instance.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a very high quality.

Inspection findings

- In the 2016 Year 6 tests, the proportions of disadvantaged pupils who reached the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics were lower than for other pupils. I explored why this was the case and what leaders are doing to diminish differences for current pupils.
- In the 2016 cohort, a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils had special educational needs and/or disabilities with cognitive difficulties. As cohort sizes are small, each pupil counts for a sizeable statistical proportion. These reasons largely account for the gaps in performance. Leaders frequently check on the progress of all pupils. They identify any pupils falling behind, including disadvantaged pupils, and arrange effective support. This helps these pupils to catch up with their peers in a timely fashion. I compared a sample of books of disadvantaged and other pupils in the same classes with similar starting points. They showed that there were no noticeable differences in terms of progress and attainment. Tracking information for current Year 6 pupils shows that in all subjects, the proportions working at the expected standard are very slightly lower for disadvantaged pupils than for others in the school. Their overall rates of progress from key stage 1 are also not as strong as for other pupils. Across other year groups, differences are diminishing but there is still some variation. Often, the lower performance of disadvantaged pupils is down to higher proportions of late joiners who are both disadvantaged and new to speaking English.
- In the 2016 Year 6 tests, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading was below the national average. In writing and mathematics, it was

similar to national averages.

- Leaders analysed the 2016 reading papers and identified that performance was weaker owing to pupils having difficulties with vocabulary and their inference skills. The newly appointed literacy leader immediately made sure that pupils have more opportunities to practise their comprehension skills and expand their vocabulary. Further, in the autumn term, leaders acquired a new teaching and learning scheme with a very systematic approach to developing pupils' reading skills. Leaders arranged for teachers to attend bespoke training. Pupils say that they are enjoying the new learning approach and feel that they are making much faster progress. Pupils value the prompt cards that help them to think hard about the text they are studying. The new teaching strategy helps pupils develop a range of skills such as retrieval, inference, predicting and clarifying. The questions and discussion prompts are effective in helping pupils to articulate clearly their thoughts and questions about the texts that they read.
- Governors visit the school regularly. This year they have focused their visits to check on how well reading is improving. Because of these developments, there has been a marked improvement across key stage 2. Tracking information shows that in all year groups across key stage 2, a good proportion of pupils are reaching the standards expected for their age. Key stage 1 to key stage 2 progress information for the current Year 6 class points to much faster progress than last year's cohort.
- I considered how well leaders are increasing attendance and decreasing persistent absence. Although overall attendance has increased year on year since the previous report, it is still not at the national average. The overall rate of persistent absence last year was in the top 10% nationally.
- Leaders have made raising attendance a key priority since the previous inspection. Leaders introduced a raft of rewards to encourage pupils to attend. This is having a positive effect. They work tirelessly with parents, the educational welfare officer, social services and other agencies in a bid to reduce absence. Leaders relentlessly check on all absent pupils. In addition to first-day calling when a pupil is absent, senior leaders call parents at least weekly when their child has not been in school for a few days. Leaders have detailed case notes for every persistently absent pupil. The case notes show examples of pupils who had high attendance in one term and then low the next. Reasons for the decline are down to unexpected health problems or other crises for pupils or family members. Many families have circumstances that make them vulnerable. The difficulties that they experience often play a part in parents not making sure that their children attend school regularly. Equally, case notes show many success stories where formerly low attendance increases markedly because of the persistence and care with which leaders work with parents to increase their children's attendance. Overall, attendance and persistent absence rates for this academic year so far are similar to last year's.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they build on their work to support disadvantaged pupils, so that they consistently make progress from their starting points that is as strong as that of other pupils
- they continue to work relentlessly with parents and other agencies so that rates of persistent absence reduce and get closer to the national average.

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

Yours sincerely

David Radomsky
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector carried out the following activities during the inspection:

- met with senior leaders, the leader of literacy, and the chair and vice-chair of the governing body
- conducted joint visits to classrooms with the headteacher
- scrutinised a range of documentation, including information about outcomes for groups of pupils, policy documentation, attendance records and information about safeguarding
- heard a group of pupils read and conducted a scrutiny of pupils' work
- considered the 11 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the responses to the school's own questionnaires for parents, pupils and staff.