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Mrs Paula Dix
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dix

Short inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 March 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 May 2014.

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 led the school through a time of significant staff change with pride, determination and enthusiasm. Parents rightly commend your strong leadership and feel that you have improved standards. You have employed, trained and empowered a strong team of teachers and support staff. Your colleagues feel well supported and trusted to do their jobs. Summarising the thoughts of many, one teacher commented, 'It is really clear that leaders have my well-being in mind as well as that of the children.' Several members of staff have recently taken on additional responsibilities. This is typified by your deputy headteacher and middle leaders who are flourishing in their roles.

Governors have maintained a watchful eye on the changes to the school and offer useful support and challenge. For example, they ensure that your deputy headteacher has more time out of class to lead improvements in the school. They have supported your recruitment of a strong team of teachers. Governors receive detailed information from middle leaders and then visit the school to check the accuracy and efficacy of leaders' actions. As a result, governors have an accurate and detailed understanding of the school's work.

Pupils are well behaved and hard working. In class they work with pride and purpose. When work gets hard, pupils dig in and do their best to complete it. They

enjoy the school's varied and interesting curriculum and told me about the wide range of trips and visits which help to bring their learning to life. For example, Year 6 pupils visited the Watercress Line, imagining what life was like for Second World War evacuees and, later, wrote thoughtful diaries about their experiences. Pupils show great care towards their peers and support each other well. Different classes 'buddy up' so that they can share their learning, providing a strong role model for younger children.

At the time of the last inspection you were asked to share the strong practice that exists in the school more widely among your staff. Teachers enjoy the school's collegiate approach to staff development. They regularly share ideas and draw on each other's expertise to plan and deliver learning that challenges and inspires pupils. Staff appreciate your efforts to reduce their workload and feel that morale is high. This has helped to support improvements in the quality of teaching.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are well maintained and fit for purpose. Statutory checks on staff are made well before they commence employment. Staff receive effective safeguarding training which helps them to identify pupils who are in danger of harm. When concerns arise, leaders waste no time, working with families and external agencies to get children the help they need.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. Year 6 visit the local Thinksafe Centre, where, in a safe and controlled environment, they learn how to deal with challenging scenarios such as being approached by strangers. Parents recently attended an online-safety presentation where they learned how to help their child to stay safe when using the internet and mobile devices.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection we agreed to look at: the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements; pupils' progress in mathematics, including that of disadvantaged pupils; how effectively teachers set work that matches pupils' needs; and how well leaders support staff to improve their practice.
- When leaders noticed a decline in mathematics progress in Year 6 they wasted no time in identifying and rectifying the areas of weakness. The changes made have dramatically improved the mathematics curriculum, encouraging pupils to develop strong calculation skills and, increasingly, to solve complex problems. Pupils, particularly the most able and most-able disadvantaged, make strong progress in mathematics. Leaders recognise that they need to iron out the few remaining inconsistencies in mathematics teaching, such as how pupils explain and record their thinking, so that all pupils are clear on what is expected in lessons.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and use this to identify and support pupils who fall behind. In Year 5, for example, the teacher worked with a group of pupils to explain the work from a previous lesson which they had found

challenging. This enabled the pupils to understand the task and correct their errors. As one member of support staff noted, 'We want children to keep up, not catch up.' Leaders are now looking to increase the support for middle-attaining pupils so that a greater proportion of them achieve at a high standard.

- The changes to the leadership team are well judged and considered. While supporting another local school you have rightly drawn upon the strength in leadership from within your team. The deputy headteacher manages the day-to-day running of the school and is highly effective because you offer her the right level of challenge and support. Middle leaders carry out their roles well as they receive useful coaching and development opportunities. The changes have inspired and invigorated this new team. They are well placed to secure further improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- methods for recording pupils' thinking and reasoning in mathematics are refined so that pupils are clear what is expected of them
- the progress of middle-attaining pupils accelerates so that greater proportions achieve at a high standard.

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

Yours sincerely

Daniel Lambert
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, senior and middle leaders and six governors, including the chair. I observed learning in six classes, all jointly with senior leaders. Together, we looked at pupils' work. I analysed a range of the school's documentation including information about pupils' achievement, the school improvement plan, and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I considered 40 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and spoke to parents at the beginning of the day. I scrutinised the results of Ofsted's pupil survey and gathered the views of other pupils throughout the day.