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Mrs Sharon Lynch

Short inspection of St William of York Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 2019, 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Governors and senior leaders are clear about the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school has rightly focused on developing the teaching of mathematics. Leaders have taken effective actions including training for staff. As a result, staff and pupils talk confidently about the improvements leaders have made. You and your team regularly check the progress of pupils and support staff in completing an analysis of gaps in pupils' understanding. You use this information effectively, providing pupils with additional support that helps them maintain good progress.

Leaders and staff have created an aspirational and highly positive culture that promotes pupils' personal and academic achievement extremely well. This has a definite impact on pupils' attitudes and outcomes. Leadership is a notable strength of the school and is developing at all levels. You work effectively with senior and middle leaders to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. Where middle leaders are new to their roles, they can work alongside more experienced colleagues.

Pupils are engaged in and enjoy their learning. They are confident, and approach lessons with commitment and enthusiasm. Pupils learn in a calm, friendly atmosphere.

The school is a positive, warm and welcoming place where staff and pupils respect each other. Staff are proud to work at the school. The school's commitment to developing well-being and positive behaviour for learning is evident in classrooms across the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors promote pupils' safety and welfare effectively. Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding because training takes place regularly, including on the government's 'Prevent' duty. This ensures that teachers have a secure understanding of how to keep pupils safe. Staff know how to deal with any concerns pupils might raise and to whom these should be reported. Links with outside organisations, such as the local authority's safeguarding officers and social services, are effective. Safeguarding records are detailed and accurate. The designated safeguarding lead works effectively with other staff and external agencies.

Pupils feel safe in school and are clear about whom they can approach if they have any concerns or problems. They understand how to keep themselves safe, including online. Pupils are knowledgeable about risks to their safety and talk confidently about how to stay safe and when to seek adult support.

Pupils, parents and staff consider this to be a safe, happy and welcoming school. Bullying is rare and concerns about pupils' well-being are dealt with effectively. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, and the majority say their children enjoy school and that they would recommend the school to others.

Inspection findings

- Outcomes in key stage 2 have improved notably over the last two years, particularly in reading and mathematics. The school recognises that standards in writing, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, have not improved as much as other subjects. We agreed, therefore, that the impact of the recent work done to improve outcomes in writing would be our first line of enquiry for the inspection. This included a focus on how leaders are using pupil premium funding to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders at all levels have taken well-chosen steps to improve disadvantaged pupils' writing. This includes additional training for staff and a strong focus on developing pupils' language and vocabulary. Pupils access a wide range of challenging books which are used to inspire their writing.
- As a result, pupils' books demonstrate that disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress in their writing and achieve in line with their peers. All pupils enjoy and benefit from a wide range of activities across the curriculum that

contribute to the improved progress evident in their writing.

- In a small number of cases, the opportunities for extending skills in writing are not completed by disadvantaged pupils. Where this is the case, their writing is less well developed than that of their peers. Leaders recognise this aspect of the development of writing could be further improved and are taking effective action to address this.
- Leaders ensure that targeted support is in place for pupils who do not make the progress in writing of which they are capable. This support is well planned and effective in improving outcomes, particularly for those experiencing multiple challenges in their learning.
- We agreed that our second line of enquiry would focus on outcomes in mathematics, which have improved notably in the last two years. We agreed to focus on how leaders have secured this improvement.
- Leaders have developed the teaching of mathematics significantly as a result of carefully planned training for staff, together with a robust programme of monitoring and feedback to teachers. Training for staff has focused on developing teachers' subject knowledge and classroom approaches. The resulting emphasis by teachers on strengthening pupils' understanding and fluency has resulted in strong progress mathematics.
- Mathematics teaching is lively and engaging. This is because teachers ensure increasing levels of challenge in lessons. Teachers plan lessons that develop understanding through well-chosen resources.
- Teachers encourage pupils to explain their thinking in response to questions. This has improved pupils' progress and outcomes. Most-able pupils are confident in explaining their understanding of complex aspects of mathematics. For example, in Year 6 pupils are able to explain their work on algebraic equations fluently.
- Our third line of enquiry focused on the number of children securing a good level of development in Reception. This dipped to below national levels in 2018.
- Leaders have implemented a wide range of effective strategies to improve outcomes at the end of the Reception Year. This has included a review of the curriculum and an emphasis on areas that were less successful, for example, personal social and emotional development and vocabulary development.
- Leaders took swift action to ensure that this cohort are making accelerated progress through Year 1. Effective planning of teaching in Year 1 is resulting in pupils achieving well. Teachers have high expectations and the strong progress made by this group of pupils is apparent in lessons and in their books.
- Teachers' targeted interventions in phonics have resulted in a significant improvement in the percentage of pupils now on track to meet the expected standard in the phonics screening check. Although a rapidly improving picture, leaders recognise that there is more to do in order to secure attainment in line with national expectations in phonics by the end of Year 1.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- disadvantaged pupils have further opportunities for extending their writing skills
- the teaching of phonics continues to accelerate the progress for pupils not yet on track to meet the expected standard in Year 1.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Roddick
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector visited lessons to observe learning jointly with members of the school's senior leadership team.

While in lessons, the inspector reviewed pupils' work and discussed their learning with them.

The inspector held meetings with a variety of leaders, staff, pupils and governors in order to explore the key lines of enquiry and the progress made by the school since the last inspection.

The inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority.

The inspector reviewed documentation including leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, improvement plans and a variety of safeguarding documentation.

The inspector evaluated the views of 61 parents who completed Parent View.