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Ms Elizabeth Walsh
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Dear Ms Walsh

Short inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Redhill

Following my visit to the school on 31 January 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 March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You know your school well. Your self-evaluation is accurate and ensures that the school continues to improve. You have grasped the opportunities created by the recent building project, which has provided plenty of extra space. You have used this to provide effective areas for small-group support and pupils' extension work. This, in addition to effective teaching, help to ensure that pupils continue to make rapid progress from their starting points.

Learning activities are well matched to pupils' needs. You have built a highly motivated staff team, whose members work well together to secure high standards across the school. Most parents who spoke to me or completed the Ofsted online questionnaire recognise the significant contribution you make to the school. Parents value the support and guidance provided by staff. However, a few responses to the online survey expressed some concerns about the school, in particular how well leaders respond when concerns about the school are raised.

Pupils are proud to be a part of the school. Those I spoke with told me that pupils and adults at school are 'friendly and open minded'. They like learning best when teachers provide fun activities such as dressing-up days and special projects. Pupils enjoy the challenges presented to them by their learning. They know that expectations are high and they work hard to achieve their targets. A number of pupils told me that teachers help them if they 'get stuck'. One pupil summed this up by saying, 'I sometimes struggle, but by the end it's not that complicated'.

Pupils behave well in and around school. The caring ethos of the school, modelled by staff and pupils alike, ensures that pupils feel valued and supported.

At the time of the last inspection, the inspectors recognised the many strengths of the school, including pupils' good achievement. They identified a need to increase the proportions of pupils attaining higher levels at the end of key stages 1 and 2. You have addressed this effectively by ensuring that teachers stretch and challenge pupils routinely. Leaders' checks on teaching, and on the progress that pupils are making, support teachers effectively. As a result, most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make strong progress.

The 2016 outcomes show that the percentages of pupils who attained higher standards in reading and mathematics matched or exceeded those nationally. However, the proportion of Year 6 pupils working at greater depth in writing was below the national average. You have taken prompt and effective action, including providing extra writing groups and sharing targets with parents and pupils, to improve the progress of pupils. I can see from the books that the most able pupils are now making rapid progress and are achieving high standards when writing for different purposes. The 2016 key stage 1 outcomes show that more pupils attained higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics than pupils nationally.

Inspectors at the last inspection also asked you to improve the quality of teaching. You have done this well by providing effective training and support to ensure that teachers' questions skilfully probe pupils' responses. Because of this, teachers are able to tackle misconceptions early and build on pupils' strengths. This ensures that pupils are supported in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding to make strong progress from their different starting points. Leaders have also ensured that pupils know how to improve their work. You monitor the quality of teaching thoroughly and know that in a very small minority of classes, teaching needs to improve further. You also acknowledge that clearer analysis of assessment information by leaders and governors is needed to secure even better results for all groups of pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

As designated lead for safeguarding you, and the governor with responsibility for safeguarding, have ensured that processes are robust and fit for purpose. Policies and processes are up to date and you have ensured that staff and governors have received appropriate safeguarding training. The systems that you have developed for recording concerns are clear and understood by all. As a result, staff know what to do and what to watch out for. Governors hold leaders to account effectively for this aspect of their work. Records are kept securely and contain appropriate checks on staff and volunteers, in order to protect pupils from risk.

The pupils I met told me that they feel safe at school. They know that they can go to staff if they are worried, and trust that staff will sort out difficulties. Pupils have been taught how to keep themselves safe, including learning about how to stay safe online. Most parents I spoke with or who completed the online questionnaire confirm that their children are happy and safe at school. Your work to reduce pupils' absence has resulted in better attendance. Where further improvement is needed, you have put in appropriate support, including work with outside agencies.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we decided to review together the provision for, and progress of, children in the early years. This is because too few children attained a good level of development in 2015. Leaders have taken appropriate action to address this.
- Staff know the children well. They observe them at work and play in a wide range of activities, in order to plan appropriate next steps. I found that the new building has provided children with an attractive and stimulating environment in which to learn, both inside and out.
- Teachers ensure that play is well supported so that children can practise basic skills purposefully. For example, children in the Chinese restaurant role-play area were provided with menus and a diary to record bookings. Overall, because of leaders' and teachers' carefully planned actions, children are now making swift progress from their starting points. The percentage of pupils attaining a good level of development rose to above national in 2016. A similar proportion are on track to achieve equally well, if not better, in 2017.
- Parents of children in the early years whom I spoke with are pleased with how quickly their children settled into school and the progress that they are making. A parent summed this up when she told me, 'She is already reading and they tell us she will be reading sentences by Easter'.
- Parents also told me that they find the information sent home, and provided at parent meetings, helpful. They quickly develop a sense of partnership with the staff. However, this partnership is not yet reflected in children's learning journals. This means that ongoing assessments are not yet fully informed by parents' contributions.
- We also decided to look at the progress of disadvantaged pupils. This is because disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 made less progress across the relevant key stage than their peers and other pupils nationally, as seen in published results.
- We wanted to explore whether the pupil premium funding was being spent effectively to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve well. The small teaching groups that you have provided using the funding are effectively supporting and challenging pupils. Disadvantaged pupils in all year groups are making rapid progress from their starting points. Governors monitor the spending of pupil premium funding. However, they do not use tracking information precisely enough yet to hold leaders stringently to account.

- Disadvantaged pupils currently at the school are making good progress in English and mathematics. Pupils' written work shows strong development of basic skills, understanding and knowledge in writing and mathematics. Pupils read sections of their class's text to me with fluency and understanding. In a phonics group, levels of pupils' engagement and enjoyment were high.
- Disadvantaged pupils who spoke to me when I visited their classrooms told me that the teaching helps them to understand and make progress. Their positive views were summed up by one pupil who said, 'I like maths now because the teacher makes it easier to understand'.
- The work of leaders to develop teaching has been further strengthened through high-quality professional development for staff. Regular sharing of pupils' work both within school and in the wider cluster of schools has raised teachers' expectations. Phase leaders and subject leaders monitor planning, look at books, talk to pupils and review assessment information well. This ensures that levels of accountability are high and good practice is shared. Because of this, teaching has improved. Staff are ambitious for each other and all groups of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they use assessment and tracking information to gain an accurate understanding of pupils' progress and the impact of initiatives
- communication with parents is improved so that:
 - leaders fully understand the concerns of parents
 - the few dissatisfied parents have a clear understanding of what leaders and teachers are improving for their children
 - more parents of children in the early years make meaningful contributions to their child's learning journey.

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

Yours sincerely

Deborah Gordon
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the subject leaders for English and mathematics, the early years leader and a group of other staff. We visited classrooms and learning areas together, along with your deputy, to observe teaching, talk to pupils and look at their work. I also met more formally with a group of pupils. We evaluated information about pupils' progress and attendance. I met with the member of staff who completes safeguarding checks and reviewed your recruitment systems, processes and records with her. I met with a number of parents at the beginning of the school day and considered their views alongside parents' responses to Parent View. I spoke with a representative of the local authority and met with a group of governors. I also reviewed the school's website and looked at how effectively the pupil premium and physical education and sport premium funding are used.