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Miss Rachel Swindell
Head of School
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Dear Miss Swindell

Short inspection of St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in February 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

The executive headteacher is providing you with good support to sustain improvements through weekly visits to the school. Staff morale is good and staff teamwork is strong. Senior leaders have developed a thoughtful curriculum which promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in their role as 'mini vinnies' in raising money for charitable causes, working as eco-warriors to conserve the environment and as playground leaders looking after younger pupils.

Pupils from the rich and diverse cultural backgrounds in the school are benefiting from opportunities to learn about the different countries in all the continents of the world, including their own. Pupils learn to respect fundamental British values through the weekly celebration of the school's values, such as compassion. As a result, the curriculum is building pupils' self-esteem and is increasing their enjoyment of learning. This was seen in pupils' enjoyment of learning in learning across the school and in their consistently good behaviour attendance. The curriculum is relatively new, based on a range of topic themes to captivate pupils' imagination, although subject leaders are not measuring its impact on pupils' progress across the full range of different subjects. Leaders have also enhanced the outdoor and indoor learning environments for children in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Leaders have addressed most of the areas for improvement identified at the inspection of the predecessor school. Attainment in reading and mathematics has risen further so that it is well above average by the end of key stage 2. Particularly strong teaching of phonics has led to a rapid increase in the proportion of children reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check from below average in 2016 to well above average in 2018. Even so, too few Year 6 pupils are attaining greater depth in writing. The targets set for some pupils' learning are not high enough.

Most parents are pleased with the work of the school, which is reflected in the positive responses in the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and their text responses during the inspection. One parental comment, typical of others, was, 'This is a really good school and I am extremely happy with the progress my child is making.'

Leaders, governors and trustees share your commitment to school improvement. Governors visit the school regularly to hold it to account for its work. They have an accurate view of the school and know what leaders need to do to improve it. They also ensure that all policies are up to date and legal requirements are met. You have worked well with school leaders to develop a realistic view of the school's strengths and priorities for development and you receive good support from the academy trustees in driving improvement forward, especially through strong links with other schools in the multi-academy trust.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors are ensuring that the school's systems for promoting pupils' welfare and safety are fit for purpose. Your thorough procedures for checking the suitability of staff and visitors are implemented effectively and all staff training in safeguarding is up to date.

Pupils stay safe in school, including children in the early years. Pupils use the internet and other equipment safely, knowing how to guard themselves from the potential dangers of the internet. They play safely in the playground and have a good understanding of the effects of bullying and how to prevent it. Pupils, parents and staff agree that bullying is very rare and is dealt with quickly. All potential risks to pupils' safety are carefully assessed. As a result, pupils are happy and feel safe in school.

Inspection findings

- To demonstrate that the school remains good, I wanted to determine if teachers were setting high enough expectations for pupils' learning and using assessment to set challenging targets, especially for the most able pupils. This was because the school identified the need for more challenge across the school, especially for this groups of pupils, in its self-evaluation. I found that staff were beginning to use the information about pupils' prior learning effectively to set challenging

targets for pupils to extend their learning. However, in discussion about their learning, a few pupils were unsure what their targets were.

- In the lessons we visited, there were good examples of teachers deepening pupils' thinking, such as extending the most able pupils' mathematical skills in Year 6 in their using algebra to solve word problems. The most able pupils in Years 3 and 4 were encouraged to use a variety of exciting adjectives and adverbs to enliven their writing about the rainforests. This was also seen in pupils' written work where, for example, pupils were writing up scientific investigations on frictional forces and making accurate predictions.
- I also wanted to know how effective the school's strategies to improve pupils' performance in writing are to increase the proportion of pupils attaining greater depth. This was because in 2018 Year 6 pupils made average progress in writing compared to their above-average progress in reading and mathematics. Most reached the expected standard but none attained greater depth.
- I found that the new developments to promote writing such as talk for writing, where pupils are encouraged to talk about their work using phrases and sentences, before writing, are beginning to have a positive effect on developing writing skills. Pupils' work across the school shows that most are making good progress in developing cursive writing and in using punctuation. Pupils' best writing was clearly on display in classrooms to promote writing at greater depth. Pupils' work showed that teachers were also challenging pupils to use a variety of interesting sentences using connectives, sentence openers and different types of clauses to bring their stories to life.
- The school has set a clear target for increasing the proportion of pupils working at greater depth in writing and staff are also using a well-conceived handwriting policy to develop pupils' handwriting and presentation skills. Although this is developing well in English, there was less evidence that handwriting skills are promoted in other subjects.
- Finally, I wanted to find out if leaders were monitoring the impact of the new curriculum on pupils' progress across a range of different subjects, especially their progress in writing.
- Middle leaders have developed a new curriculum based on topic themes and are increasing the opportunities for pupils to improve their progress in writing within topic work. Pupils' work shows that progress in developing writing skills in their topic work is variable. In some cases, pupils are making good progress, for example in using a range of interesting vocabulary in topics on Judaism and Christianity but not as strong in other topics. Subject leaders are not checking pupils' progress in writing across the full range of topics and ensuring that the school's handwriting policy is implemented consistently across the full range of subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils across the school are taught the skills well enough to enable them to write at greater depth
- teachers ensure that pupils know their targets to extend their learning
- subject leaders check the impact of the new curriculum on the progress pupils are making across a broad range of subjects, especially the implementation of the handwriting policy in improving handwriting.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of East Anglia, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Declan McCarthy
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, senior and middle leaders, four governors and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust. I carried out joint visits with you to all classes across the school including Nursery and Reception. I looked at samples of pupils work, including children's work in the early years. I took account of the 47 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and their 42 text responses. I also looked at the online questionnaire responses from staff and pupils. I examined a range of documentation, including: the school's self-evaluation document; the school development and improvement plan; minutes of governing body meetings and records of their visits; safeguarding policies and procedures; attendance figures; records of behaviour and the school's information about the progress pupils are making.