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Mrs Angela Bennett
Headteacher
St Joseph and St Teresa Catholic Primary School
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Dear Mrs Bennett

Short inspection of St Joseph and St Teresa Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 18 October 2016, 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 November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

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

Your determination to ensure that the school's vision of 'providing a rich and engaging experience so that pupils realise their academic, personal and spiritual potential' is readily apparent in all aspects of your work. Your effective leadership galvanises the whole school community because you work in unity with pupils, families and staff to ensure that the school continues to flourish at pace. Consequently, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has continued to improve since the last inspection and the subjects and topics pupils study have been enriched even further over the last year.

You are a highly reflective leader and your own evaluation of current school performance is precise. You are working swiftly on the right aspects of school improvement.

The strength of your leadership is also recognised in the support work you do with other schools. Currently, you work as executive headteacher providing support for another school in the Diocese of Clifton. You also provide mentoring support for other headteachers.

You do not shy away from difficult decisions and make it your business to 'wear the shoes' of pupils to establish how well they learn and make progress in lessons and

over time. As a result, you ably support your staff to grow and help pupils develop as well-rounded learners.

You, governors, staff and parents are rightly proud of the high academic standards that pupils reach. However, you are not complacent in any aspect of your work. For example, you are persistent in your drive to improve rates of progress in writing for all groups of pupils across the school and strive to ensure that standards in writing match those achieved in reading and mathematics.

Pupils show superb attitudes to learning. They are keen to do well and use every opportunity to master and improve their skills. Pupils are articulate and read well. All pupils spoken to during the inspection were very positive about every aspect of school life. Pupils are proud to be part of the whole school family.

Safeguarding is effective.

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils feel safe in school and are taught about a range of potential risks. Pupils talk confidently about how to keep safe, including describing the importance of e-safety and site safety. Pupils explained confidently how 'blocks' were in place on the internet and how this keeps them safe when they use tablets and computers in school.

Senior leaders make sure that training is up to date and reviewed regularly so that a clear culture of safeguarding practice is embedded across the school. Cause for concern forms are used appropriately and teachers fully understand their duty to report any concerns they have. Staff are vigilant. They make timely referrals and demonstrate a good understanding of their responsibilities if they suspect pupils are at risk of harm. Leaders follow up any concerns quickly with external agencies to make sure that everything is being done to support vulnerable pupils. Staff have been trained to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism through the government's 'Prevent' duty.

Attendance of vulnerable pupils is tracked effectively. Although it is improving, it remains a high priority going forwards. Any pupils taken off the school admissions register are quickly referred to the local authority and procedures followed in terms of pupils possibly missing in education.

The staff induction process is robust, which means that they can quickly adhere to and apply school policies to be confident that pupils are kept safe. The safeguarding governor also checks that all training, the single central register and paperwork are up to date.

Statutory safeguarding requirements are met.

Inspection findings

- As headteacher, you are passionate that pupils do work that interests and motivates them. You and your team have worked tirelessly to ensure that writing

is taught successfully across the curriculum. A recent visit to Glastonbury Tor provided a clear stimulus for writing. Consequently, pupils showed high levels of engagement in this task, rose to the challenge well and, as a result, their writing outcomes were impressive. However, not all writing tasks are as effective if they are too tightly structured for pupils or they do not provide enough challenge.

- You have instigated a comprehensive training plan to develop all pupils' writing further and this improvement work is beginning to take hold well. As a result, a greater proportion of pupils are being targeted for working at a higher standard at the end of this academic year. Nevertheless, you accurately acknowledge that there is still more to be done so that a greater proportion of pupils write consistently well. This is because too few pupils make better than expected progress in writing, based on their starting points.

- At key stage 2, pupils generally spell well but their ability to write and manipulate sentences to create specific impact is less successful. You rightly identify that pupils would benefit from more time to edit and improve their work so that they can build on the detailed feedback that teachers provide. Without regular time for this, pupils' ability to swiftly develop their writing is inhibited, particularly for the most able.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from timely support in lessons. As a result, work in books shows improvement and writing is developing well over time. For those pupils who have English as an additional language, teachers quickly plan work to support spoken and written language. As a result, pupils catch up rapidly and many of this group now meet or are close to age-related expectations.

- The Reception classroom is lively and inviting. The newly improved outdoor area provides plentiful ways for children to apply their basic number and language skills. Over the last three years, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standards at the end of early years has been in line with or above national expectations. Boys, however, do less well than girls in some aspects of learning, including writing. For those pupils who failed to meet the required standard at the end of early years, the school wasted no time developing their writing in Year 1 so that they are catching up quickly and very effectively this term. However, wide differences between boys' and girls' achievement persist. This remains a high priority for leaders going forwards.

- Children make progress which is typical for their age in Reception. Leaders' actions to improve outcomes so that all children make consistently high rates of progress whatever their starting points are developing well. You are steadfast in your aim to increase the proportion of children exceeding the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Reception. Detailed assessments of what children can do mean that early years staff can consistently plan activities which build on what children already know and which consolidate and extend their learning well.

- Overall, attendance is above the national average. For a small number of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils (eligible for additional government funding) or those who have English as an additional language, their attendance is not yet consistently high. The school has systems in place to monitor and track attendance and it is rising gradually. However, there is still more to do to improve attendance for these groups.

- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school; all who completed the online 'Parent View' survey said that they would recommend it. The parents who spoke to inspectors made comments such as the school 'goes the extra mile' to care for and support their children. Inspection evidence confirms that pastoral development and care is a strength of the school. Parents feel that the school is well led and managed.

- Governors know the school well. Minutes of meetings confirm that governors hold the school to account robustly. They provide support and considerable challenge to leaders; for example, they undertake their own visits to the school and track the progress and attainment of pupils in mathematics and English. Governors keep a close eye on how additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is spent. It is used well to pay for educational visits to enrich pupils' experiences and to provide successful support for those with social and emotional needs. However, this funding is not yet being fully maximised to accelerate pupils' progress so that a greater proportion of disadvantaged pupils make more than expected progress in writing. Work to resolve this is already under way.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:
- pupils make consistently high rates of progress in writing, and the proportion of them exceeding the writing standards expected for their age increases even further
- attendance of all groups of pupils improves and is never less than the national average
- the proportion of Reception Year children making consistently high rates of progress from their starting points increases and the current difference between boys' and girls' achievement diminishes quickly.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Clifton and the director of children's services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Julie Carrington
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors considered the effectiveness of leaders to improve pupils' progress in writing; leaders' current actions to improve outcomes in early years; the effectiveness of the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils; the effectiveness of safeguarding; and leaders' actions to reduce absence for pupils.

I met with you and the head of school. I spoke with three members of the governing body. I also met with middle leaders. I accompanied you on visits to lessons and together we looked at pupils' books. I took into account the 75 results from the 'Parent View' questionnaire and eight responses from the staff online questionnaire. I talked to a number of pupils to gain their views of the school. I evaluated the accuracy of your self-evaluation and reviewed a range of other documentation, including current action plans and assessment data.