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Miss Carrie Morrow
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Morrow

Short inspection of Sacred Heart RC Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 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 October 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained and in some aspects improved upon the overall good quality of education since the last inspection. Leaders have made sure that pupils write for different purposes in different styles and in different subjects. Pupils said that writing lessons had improved significantly over the last three years and their work shows some very good writing. For example, they use good technical geographical knowledge and terminology in their explanations about geographical features and places. Their writing in history, however, is restricted by worksheets that limit the amount they are able to write and this limits the quality of writing.

Pupils are happy and interested in their work and most parents are highly supportive of the school's work. Pupils said that behaviour in lessons is good and they can concentrate on their work. My visits to lessons during the day confirmed these views. You identified over a year ago that pupils used homophobic terminology. You tackled this issue strongly and as a result, the number of incidents has fallen significantly. As a result, pupils are more prepared to live their lives in modern Britain respecting all people. This thread of equality and diversity is embedded within the school's culture. Pupils worked well with each other regardless of ethnicity, background, gender or ability. Pupils spoke politely to each other and used good manners. This behaviour reflects staff's positive relationships with pupils and their modelling of how others should be treated.

Governors have a good overview of pupils' achievement across a range of subjects and of the quality of teaching. They ask searching and challenging questions. However, their checking of how well the school uses external funding has not been sharp enough. Similarly, their checking of the school's website has not been thorough.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Safeguarding pupils has a high profile in the school. Staff are alert and they communicate any concerns they have, which are followed up very well by you and the learning mentor. These concerns include when a child is in danger of going missing from education, expresses extremist views or terminology, is in danger from an adult or is in danger of neglect. You and the learning mentor make sure that documentation is completed thoroughly. You share information readily with, and use the expertise of, other agencies, such as the police, social workers and healthcare professionals.

Staff also work well with professionals from all agencies to make sure that those children who are looked after achieve well. The attendance of this group of pupils is high and they make good progress.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I looked into the quality of pupils' writing because this was an area for improvement identified at the previous inspection. In the last two years, pupils' attainment and progress in key stage 2 have been good. From their low starting points, boys and disadvantaged pupils make good progress, so by the time they leave Year 6 they have at least attained the expected standard for their age. Pupils said that writing lessons have improved significantly and they enjoy them much more than previously. Pupils' work showed some good examples of writing across the curriculum. In geography in particular, there was some very good writing using some complex geographical vocabulary and terminology. In contrast, in history and sometimes in science, pupils' writing does not reflect their ability to write as demonstrated in their English work. This is sometimes because some of the worksheets they are given to complete have very limited space or ask questions that are too simple and do not require extended sentences or paragraphs. Similarly in history, pupils' writing often consisted of captions and labels rather than extended sentences.
- The school's assessment information shows that very few of the disadvantaged children attained a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year in the last three years. I spent some time observing the Reception class, looking at how the pupil premium grant is spent, speaking with the leader for the early years and looking at the latest assessments. It is clear that although this group of children have not attained a good level of development, they are tracked well by you and the teachers. They receive additional teaching to help them catch up with other pupils. The children who also have special educational needs and/or disabilities make very good progress from their starting points. The most able

disadvantaged children make good progress overall, but could do with being more rigorously challenged so that more of them attain the expected standard for their age by the end of the Reception Year.

- The website does not contain all of the information it should. The school receives approximately £50,000 in additional funding to support pupils who are disadvantaged and approximately £8,000 to support competitive sport and physical education. The analysis of the impact of these external funds on pupils given on the website is not precise enough, and as a result this was my third line of enquiry for this inspection.
- The governing body has a good overview of teaching and learning and of pupils' achievement in different subjects. Governors ask searching and challenging questions of you and other leaders. They contribute to the culture and ethos in the school and set a clear direction for improvement. They are knowledgeable and experienced, and are passionate about the school. The governing body had an awareness of how the sports funding is used, for example, to employ a knowledgeable and experienced sports coach. However, they do not measure precisely enough the impact of the funding or check that it is spent correctly. Last year, part of the premium was used to fund swimming lessons, but because swimming is an entitlement in the national curriculum, the funding cannot be used for this purpose. The governing body has not made sure that the website explains disadvantaged pupils' barriers to learning or leaders' approaches to tackling these barriers. The document that explains the impact of the use of the grant is not detailed, thorough or precise enough. Governors should make sure that the grant is used to enable more disadvantaged pupils to attain standards across the curriculum in greater depth.
- The website does not have full enough information about what each year group is studying in each subject. During this inspection, I spent a large amount of time looking at lessons and pupils' work, and talking to pupils about subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils' progress and attainment in art, music, drama and geography are very good. The curriculum for, and teaching of, history are less effective than in other subjects. Pupils' knowledge of how different civilizations fit into a chronological time period is underdeveloped. Their progress is hindered in this subject by worksheets and activities that are too simple or do not develop pupils' accurate understanding of history, or of different time periods. Teaching across the school is effective, although in a few instances the effectiveness is undermined by teachers' errors in spoken Standard English, and by some teaching assistants' errors when teaching their groups.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the pupil premium grant enables a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils to exceed the standards expected for their age across most subjects
- the physical education and sport premium enables a higher proportion of pupils each year to participate in competitive sport, increase their level of sporting skills

and improve their health and well-being

- the governing body measures the impact of the external funding thoroughly and with greater precision
- improvements are made to the curriculum, teaching and pupils' understanding of chronology in history.

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

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and with other members of staff, including the leader of the early years. I met with four members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I visited lessons with you to observe teaching in humanities, physical education and science. I looked through pupils' work, met a group of pupils and reviewed the 54 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. I discussed safeguarding with you and the learning mentor. I reviewed the 23 responses to Parent View, and the 11 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.