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Mrs Debra Newman
Principal
Corpus Christi Catholic School
Langbank Avenue
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Dear Mrs Newman

Short inspection of Corpus Christi Catholic School

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 2018, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in May 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

You have skilfully managed a significant turnover of staff since your last inspection as well as establishing a trusted role within the Romero Catholic Multi Academy Company. You provide strong direction for all staff and have clearly communicated those expectations which are non-negotiable. As a result, staff understand the priorities for ongoing improvement and their accountabilities in securing success. You are unafraid to challenge where necessary but you are demonstrably fair in providing support to bring about the necessary improvements. All those who responded to the Ofsted staff survey agreed that leaders do all they can to ensure that the school has a motivated, respected and effective teaching staff. They were also unanimous in their belief that you have created a working climate in which teachers are trusted to take risks and innovate in ways that are right for the pupils. Pupils are at the heart of all your decision-making.

Pupils are keen to come to school, they settle quickly to lessons and are proud of their individual successes. In lessons, pupils respond readily to the challenge of set tasks. They concentrate on their work with a strong sense of commitment and enjoyment. They take responsibility for the quality of their work and readily help one another. When tasks are challenging, pupils eagerly find a variety of solutions and are keen to share their methods and approaches. All pupils have the opportunity to work with the school's artist in residence on particular projects.

Current Year 6 pupils enjoyed their contribution to the successful Coventry City of Culture bid by working with Imagineer, designers, engineers, architects and artists. Pupils enjoy their experience of the 4D learning space where they are surrounded by a choice of images, including space and underwater, to stimulate their imagination.

You lost no time in addressing the improvements identified at the last inspection. You focused sharply on improving teachers' knowledge of the age-related expectations for reading. You ensured that they understood a range of relevant teaching strategies so that pupils developed the appropriate knowledge and skills for their age. You identified pupils' weak comprehension skills and with staff you set about enriching pupils' vocabulary and providing time in lessons for pupils to analyse different types of text to inform their understanding. You invested in reading resources and, with staff, fostered pupils' love of books. You developed teachers' questioning techniques so they could better assess pupils' understanding in lessons and encourage their contribution to ideas and explanations. You endeavour to identify staff's potential expertise and you inspire them to take on additional responsibilities. You have successfully developed staff to take on leadership roles within and beyond the school.

You are determined to further improve the rates of pupils' progress across all key stages so that all pupils attain standards in line with, or above, national age-related expectations. Your subject and phase leaders are suitably ambitious to drive substantial improvement. You have invested significantly in resources to engage pupils' knowledge and skills in mathematics. You have provided appropriate staff training so that they are more aware of the demands of the national curriculum and staff confidence has improved. However, both initiatives are relatively new to the school and will require time to develop further and embed.

Safeguarding is effective.

All staff are well informed about national and local safeguarding priorities and they are diligent in observing and identifying pupils who may be at risk of abuse, harm or neglect. Staff are suitably aware of pupils' individual contexts, such as domestic issues, healthcare and irregular attendance. Staff record their concerns in detail and lose no time in making referrals or keeping individual circumstances under review. Leaders work closely with the multi-agency safeguarding hub to keep track of the contributions provided by various external agencies. Records of support or intervention at any level are recorded in detail and regularly reviewed and updated.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training including termly updates and compulsory online modules. School policies are well understood and procedures are applied meticulously. Pupils are taught how to stay safe, for example when using mobile telephones or computers. They know potential risks and how to report concerns. Leaders also provide workshops for parents so they know how to take control of their children's access to internet sites.

The school conducts suitable recruitment checks for staff, governors and volunteers.

Visitors to the school are subject to appropriate levels of checks and access to the school grounds and premises is restricted.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and staff quickly gain a clear, detailed and accurate view of individual children's strengths and priorities for development on entry to Nursery or Reception classes. A high proportion of children enter Nursery or Reception with knowledge and skills well below those expected of children their age. They have limited understanding of the English language and little experience of socialising with other children. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is improving but is likely to remain below the national average because of their low starting points. Staff carefully plan activities so that children learn to handle and share toys, tools and equipment. They focus well on building children's vocabulary so they can participate, socialise and learn. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They work cooperatively on tasks or as they explore outdoor equipment. Children are eager to listen, describe and explain as they work through a range of well-planned activities, which inspire their interest.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check was above the national average in 2015 and 2016 but fell to slightly below average in 2017. The key stage 1 phase leader took prompt action to analyse and identify pupil's individual weaknesses, which led to the dip in results. She provided training for staff and then led weekly workshops to sharpen further their confidence and skill in teaching phonics. She keeps a close eye on pupils' progress, identifies those who are at risk of falling behind, or those showing particular strengths, and plans suitable support to ensure their success. Assessments of Year 1 pupils' reading fluency demonstrate an impressive rate of progress from autumn 2017 to February this year.
- The proportion of Year 2 pupils meeting the expected standard or that of greater depth was average or above in all subjects from 2013 to 2016. However, results dipped below the national figures in 2017. You and other leaders took immediate action to improve the quality of teaching by providing appropriate training. You purchased a range of new resources and provided ongoing support for teachers to ensure that they successfully implemented new approaches. Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress to inform them about what support or extension work is required. Staff have quickly adopted new assessment systems to track pupils' progress over time and inform their day-to-day teaching priorities. Leaders conduct termly pupil progress meetings with staff to check on individual pupils' achievement in each subject. School records and pupils' work show that current Year 2 pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Assessments in February this year showed that the proportion of pupils working at the expected age-related standard in all subjects was in line with national figures achieved in 2017. You have invested a lot of time and resources to improve pupils' attitudes to reading. You have bought new books, created a well-organised and inviting library and successfully raised pupils' enthusiasm for the world of literature.

- You identified that pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics was not as strong as in other subjects. A new leader for mathematics was appointed in January 2017. You purchased a new published scheme and improved the range of mathematical resources. You engaged mathematical expertise to assist staff in developing new approaches to their teaching. Your monitoring of teaching and learning shows that pupils have quickly developed an ability for mathematical reasoning to help them solve problems and explain their understanding. Nevertheless, older pupils have considerable gaps in their mathematical knowledge. The leader for mathematics provides additional 'tackling maths sessions' and booster classes. These sessions are extremely popular with pupils and they willingly give up their own time to attend. As a result, pupils have developed a genuine interest and enthusiasm for mathematics. Pupils in almost all year groups have achieved substantial rates of progress over the year to date.
- The school is placed in an area of high deprivation and the proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average. In 2017, key stage 1 disadvantaged pupils attained below other pupils nationally at the expected standard and that of greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6 in 2017, disadvantaged pupils had made better rates of progress than other pupils nationally in all subjects but their attainment remained below that of other pupils. The assistant vice-principal was appointed in September 2017. She analysed any specific learning difficulty which held back pupils' attainment. She identified where pupils needed particular support. She ensures that all support is carefully crafted to meet pupils' individual needs and she regularly reviews the effectiveness of such support. She is careful to consider pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem and has successfully developed these areas by enabling older pupils to support and coach younger pupils. Rates of progress have continued to improve in almost all year groups.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff build on recent initiatives to improve further the rates of pupils' progress across all key stages
- staff develop and embed recently introduced strategies to improve pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local academy committee, the chair of the multi-academy company board of directors, the chief executive officer, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Birmingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Coventry. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Deana Holdaway
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the vice- and assistant vice-principals and leaders responsible for early years, English, mathematics and pupil premium and the special educational needs coordinator. I also met a representative of multi-academy company board of directors. I observed teaching with you and spoke to pupils in lessons. I looked at pupils' work and examined information regarding pupils' standards of attainment and rates of progress. I considered responses from Parent View and electronic surveys for staff. I looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, the records of a number of external reviews and a range of school policies.