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Mrs Janet Ward  
Headteacher  
Our Lady Mother of the Saviour Catholic Primary School  
Lapwing Grove  
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Cheshire  
WA7 2TP

Dear Mrs Ward

### **Short inspection of Our Lady Mother of the Saviour Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 3 November 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 March 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The new leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As deputy headteacher at the time of the last inspection, you introduced a new system to assess pupils and check on the progress they are making. As headteacher, you have continued to use this accurate assessment information to drive further improvements in the school, ably supported by other leaders, many of whom you have appointed.

You have developed a staff team whose members are fully committed to making this school the best it can be, a goal which pupils are also keen to achieve. Your views of the school are accurately based on robust evidence gathered from observations of teaching and learning and checks on pupils' progress, externally validated by your school improvement partner. You use this information well to identify what needs to improve and, together with governors, you manage the school budget carefully to make sure that pupils benefit directly from the changes you make.

In tackling the areas for development from your last inspection, you have introduced one book which is used by pupils across all subjects for their writing. This has helped teachers to correct literacy errors to the same high standard across the curriculum and to provide pupils with helpful and consistent advice to improve their writing skills. Over time, pupils can see for themselves the improvements they

are making in their writing and they are very proud to share this information. Teachers carefully plan opportunities for pupils to write at length. The use of worksheets to help pupils to scaffold their responses is well balanced with opportunities to write more creatively.

Improvements you have already made to teaching and learning have brought about greater consistency in the level of challenge for all pupils, including for the most able. Teachers successfully raise pupils' aspirations through setting personalised targets for pupils in their work, as is required by the school's teaching and learning policy. Pupils know what teachers expect of them and routinely rise to this challenge because they are keen to demonstrate what they are capable of achieving. Teachers use questioning well to encourage pupils to think carefully about their work. For example, pupils are consistently asked by teachers to explain their answers in mathematics. This helps them to develop an understanding of proof, at the same time as encouraging the development of good oral communication skills.

You have a specialist leader of education (SLE), a teacher and two teaching assistants who are trained in improving learning in mathematics. Together, this team is providing effective support for pupils who need additional help because they have fallen behind in mathematics. Your SLE provides training for teachers from other local primary schools to develop the teaching and learning of key skills in mathematics. School leaders therefore have the capacity to drive further improvements in the school and also to support the development of other schools.

A new chair of the governing body has been appointed since the last inspection and, following a review of governors' skills, governors have restructured their committees. Committee members have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience to enable them to ask challenging questions of leaders. Where there were gaps in governors' skills, training has been delivered to make sure that they are better able to hold leaders to account.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have very effectively created a culture of safeguarding in the school in which all staff, and pupils, understand their responsibility to keep each other safe.

Records are kept to confirm that all staff have attended whole-school training, as required. All staff have been trained in the most recent national guidance about keeping children safe and have completed training to help them to look out for signs of extremism and radicalisation. Governors have taken part in this training and a further catch-up session is planned for those unable to attend the first events. Senior leaders and the chair of the governing body have completed safer recruitment training. At least one of them is present when any staff appointments are made. Pre-employment checks are carried out correctly and records meet requirements. Risk assessments for activities in school and off site are completed rigorously by staff who show a good awareness of a range of possible risks to pupils.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe from a range of risks. This includes road-safety awareness and how to keep themselves safe when using computers or mobile devices. Junior safety officers in Year 5 spoke confidently about the importance of their role in helping to keep children safe on the playground. They know where to go to get help from an adult and what first-aid treatment to apply in immediate response to any bumps and grazes. Pupils say that they feel safe in the school. They say that there is no bullying or name-calling and they are confident that teachers do their best to sort out problems when friendships break down. Parents confirm the view that their children are safe in school.

## **Inspection findings**

- Teachers are fully committed to improving their teaching skills. They are keen to support colleagues in improving their practice through sharing ideas and providing coaching. This culture of improvement, created by senior leaders, includes teachers taking part in further training and some teachers working on their own classroom research projects.
- Your priority has, quite rightly, been to make sure that reading improves for all pupils in school. In September 2013, you introduced an approach to teaching pupils to read using phonics. You made sure that teachers and teaching assistants were well trained to deliver phonics. As a result, reading is improving. More pupils than ever before are reaching the required standard in the Year 1 phonics check, and all pupils are successful by the time they reach the end of Year 2.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have not had the same secure approach to helping them to read well from the time they started in school. Standards in reading are less strong than those seen in writing and mathematics as some pupils still have some catching up to do. The most able pupils who have finished the school's levelled reading scheme read with confidence, expression and understanding. However, teachers do not give them enough guidance to make sure that they read suitably challenging texts that continue to extend their vocabulary and improve comprehension.
- Your school calculation policy makes sure that all teachers follow a consistent approach to teaching written calculation methods, and this is helping pupils to improve their basic skills in mathematics. Leaders' checks on learning in mathematics confirm that teachers plan for mastery through asking pupils to explain their thinking, to solve problems and to develop fluency through well-thought-out activities.
- Teachers and leaders use assessment information well to check on the progress that pupils make throughout the school. Considerable overlap exists between some groups of pupils, such as disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This provides challenges for governors in trying to decide whether these different sources of funding are being used appropriately.
- Teachers plan personalised catch-up programmes in reading and mathematics, which they tailor to pupils' needs to help them to fill gaps in learning.

- Baseline assessments confirm the considerable difficulties that some Reception children have with speech and language development, communication and personal and social skills. Although the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development remains below national figures, particularly in literacy, pupils are well supported in developing their skills.
- Through diligent use of the school budget you have greatly enhanced the Reception classroom. The outside learning space, which opened at the start of this term, creates rich opportunities for children to apply their learning in basic skills to activities outside. A natural flow of learning was seen from indoors to outdoors, with no opportunities for learning being wasted. This is making a difference to children's physical development as well as improving their personal and social skills.
- Vulnerable pupils are very well cared for at this school. Leaders work closely with outside agencies, including children's social care, the early help team, educational psychologists and specialist speech and language provision.
- A nurture group led by a higher level teaching assistant, trained in supporting children's social and emotional needs, has recently been introduced. This facility offers a flexible support programme for pupils who are in need of help at different points in their lives, such as following bereavement. A number of pupils are also young carers, which leaders support and monitor as a group.
- Parents greatly appreciate the workshops that are organised by teachers to help them to better understand how they can help their children at home. These are very well attended.
- Attendance remains broadly average overall but shows an improvement so far this term, compared with the same period last year. Pupils greatly appreciate the certificates and rewards they receive for improved attendance and punctuality. Parents enjoy attending Friday assemblies to see their children receiving their prizes.
- Absence continues to be high for disadvantaged pupils. Attendance rewards, which are helping to improve attendance for most pupils, are making little difference for this group and other strategies now need to be considered.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- attendance for all pupils improves further, but particularly for disadvantaged pupils
- teachers provide greater guidance to pupils who complete the levelled reading scheme, to make sure that the reading and comprehension skills of the most able readers continue to improve.

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

Yours sincerely

Denah Jones  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

The key lines of enquiry for this inspection were to find out whether safeguarding continues to be effective and to see whether leaders have been successful in providing further opportunities for pupils to improve their writing skills in all subjects, and providing greater challenge in lessons for the most able. Other key lines of enquiry were to find out how leaders have brought about the improvement in achievement in Reception and to see whether the actions leaders are taking to improve reading are making any difference. The comparatively lower standards seen by disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, together with the historically low attendance for these groups, were also investigated further.

During this inspection, I met you and your staff, a group of governors including the chair of the governing body, and your school improvement partner. I considered the views of parents by talking to them when they arrived to collect their children at the end of the day. I also looked at the 32 responses to Ofsted's parent survey and the 21 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. I met with members of the school council and talked with other pupils during their lunchtime. You and your deputy headteacher joined me in short visits to lessons and I checked pupils' work in their books to find out about the improvements you have made to teaching, learning and assessment. I listened to pupils read, including more confident readers, and carried out checks on safeguarding documentation.