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Mr Colin Flanagan
Headteacher
St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School
Hooks Lane
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Dear Mr Flanagan

Short inspection of St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School, Havant

Following my visit to the school on 21 November 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 November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You provide clear and ambitious leadership. You are determined that every pupil will succeed and that they will leave St Thomas More's feeling that they have achieved more than they had ever expected. The leadership team, including governors, have a clear and accurate view of what the school does well and what could be even better. Parents value your leadership.

Pupils enjoy coming to St Thomas More's. They are polite, well behaved and confident. They find learning is fun and enjoy aspects of school life like trips, the choir and the annual nativity play. The spoke about how friendly their school is and how 'this school encourages you not to leave anyone out'. You and your team have created a caring school. As one parent commented, 'The school is encouraging and nurturing, and has pupil welfare at its heart.'

The previous inspection report highlighted several strengths, including the good progress that pupils make from their different starting points, the high expectations that teachers have, and the good behaviour and attitudes of pupils to their work. You have maintained these strengths. At the time of the last inspection you were asked to improve the quality of teaching and to ensure that work is always hard enough for the most able pupils. You have taken some effective action to address these areas. Through high-quality evaluation, you have ensured that the drive for improvement in teaching is at the centre of everything you do. Most-able pupils are

challenged appropriately.

Provisional results in writing at the end of Year 6 in 2017 indicate that attainment at the expected standard exceeded national averages. However, the proportion of pupils who attained greater depth in writing was below the national average. You recognise that there is still work to do to ensure that more pupils make accelerated progress in writing to achieve the higher standards. You have also rightly identified that further accelerating the progress that disadvantaged pupils make should be a key priority for leaders in the immediate future.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of a high quality. Leaders have established strong relationships with external agencies. Staff are vigilant in following up any welfare concerns they have about a child. As a team, they understand the specific risks associated with your local area.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. They demonstrate a strong knowledge of the different types of bullying. They say that bullying does not often happen, but when it does, 'It will get sorted straight away.' Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils said that they feel safe in school and are confident that there is always someone to talk to should they have a problem.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors have a strong understanding of the quality of teaching in the school. You want nothing but the best for your pupils and intervene swiftly when teaching is not of the high standard you expect. You provide effective professional development for staff and, as a result, teaching skills are continually improving. Middle and senior leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They provide good advice and challenge to staff. Classroom observations indicate that the most able pupils are usually challenged in their work. Teachers constantly ask questions that deepen pupils' understanding. Pupils could tell me how to improve their work and they showed me many examples of where they have effectively done so.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to write at length and for a purpose, often linked to a high-quality text. For example, in a Year 2 writing lesson, pupils were describing a Victorian Christmas tree. They were confidently using conjunctions in their writing to extend sentences. Their phonics knowledge was secure. Pupils know how to improve their writing by identifying next steps from a first attempt. Pupils' books show that they write clearly and fluently to reach expectations that are at least in line with those expected for their age. However, teacher assessment shows that not enough pupils are reaching the higher standards in writing in key stage 2.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is honest and accurate. They responded swiftly to the disappointing key stage 1 results in 2016. In 2017, the key stage 1 reading,

writing and mathematics results were above national averages for pupils attaining the expected standard, as well as for those attaining a greater depth. School development planning is focused on the correct areas. Governors have a good understanding of the school's challenges. They know the school well and have a good grasp of the school's performance information.

- You have a good understanding of the barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged pupils in your school. You allocate pupil premium funding to agreed priorities and have carefully analysed the impact of work in this area. Assessment information shows that current interventions are mainly effective, especially for the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils by the end of key stage 2. However, you have rightly identified the need for a sharper focus across the school on the use of the funding to raise attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- an increasing proportion of pupils are working at greater depth in their writing by the end of key stage 2
- they refine the use of additional funding to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils further.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lea Hannam
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy to discuss the school's effectiveness. Together, we visited lessons to observe pupils' learning, speak to pupils and look at their work. We also assessed the quality of pupils' work in books. I met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke to pupils about their school. I considered 98 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire and the accompanying free-text comments. I spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day. Staff and pupil questionnaires were also considered. I spoke with representatives of the local authority and the diocese. I evaluated the school's safeguarding arrangements. I examined a wide range of documentation, including your self-evaluation and improvement planning, pupils' progress information, monitoring records and policies.