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Mrs Krystyna Bickley  
Headteacher  
St Gregory's Catholic Primary School  
Park Road  
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West Midlands  
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Dear Mrs Bickley

### **Short inspection of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 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 February 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You, staff and governors have created an environment in which every pupil feels valued. Parents and carers are very supportive. The overwhelming majority of parents who took part in the online survey recommend the school, as they believe their children are happy and taught well. You and governors share the same high level of commitment and drive required in order to bring about continued improvement. This is reflected in the confidence that staff and parents have in the school's leadership. One parent had been extremely concerned that her child may not get a place in the school, and spoke of her relief when the place was confirmed. Another could not praise the school highly enough for the work that has been done in supporting their child.

The pupils come first and are central to the school's work. You have created an inclusive community where innovation is welcomed and every small step to success is celebrated. The passion that is shared by you and all other stakeholders is clear.

You and your staff know each pupil individually. Your school is a very caring and nurturing environment. This was reflected in a conversation I had with a pupil who commented on how safe and happy they are in school.

Since the last inspection, you and other leaders have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at that time. The quality of teacher feedback to pupils is consistently high across all year groups. Pupils respond well to this and are able to address areas for development within their work rapidly and with great success. The school improvement plan is fit for purpose and is well focused on key issues. This, combined with realistic targets and clear success criteria, enables leaders to continually assess the school's progress along its path of ongoing improvement. Teachers provide high levels of challenge for all pupils, including the most able. However, leaders also appreciate that this is an area that needs to be continually monitored and assessed.

The school is going from strength to strength. You are providing a good and in some respects an excellent quality of education. However, leaders are also mindful of the need to address issues relating to the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. You and your staff have created a purposeful learning environment in the early years and together you are aware of the need to focus on strengthening the assessment of pupils during every activity, an initiative that is yet to be fully embedded.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

All procedures and policies are in place to ensure that safeguarding is a strength across the school. You have provided all staff with the appropriate training and have developed a shared understanding that the safeguarding of pupils is everyone's responsibility. By building relationships with outside agencies, you have further strengthened safeguarding and provided deeper layers of support to ensure that all pupils are as safe as possible.

Your involvement with parents has given them confidence and a sense of security for the well-being of their children. This is shown by your determination to account for all pupils when absent, which parents appreciate as part of your responsibility, and goes towards their sense of trust and faith in you. Parents unanimously agree that their children are safe in your care.

The pupils that I spoke to know how to keep themselves safe including all aspects of e-safety. They were all very keen to tell me how safe they feel at school, how much they enjoy school and how well they are cared for and looked after by you and your staff.

### **Inspection findings**

- Teachers have high expectations for the progress and attainment of all groups of children within the early years. This is further supported by careful tailoring of work to the ability and needs of individuals to maximise the level of challenge. Teachers know the children well and have a thorough understanding of what each child needs to help them achieve the next steps in their learning. Through rigorous assessment, teachers are able to make timely interventions to ensure that any misconceptions are rapidly addressed.
- Children are busy learners who demonstrate a positive attitude to their learning and a very inquisitive nature. They are confident individuals who talk knowledgeably and with excitement about their work. They have a clear idea of the purpose of what they

are doing and what outcomes they wish to achieve. Although tasks are well structured and designed to appeal to learners, at times not enough effort is given to considering the required outcome and how to establish the level of learning that has taken place.

- Pupils within key stages 1 and 2 are able to reflect on their work and identify areas for improvement or what steps they need to take to improve. This is further enhanced by high-quality feedback from teachers. There is a strong ethos of challenge and rapid progress across the school, which leads to a sense of purpose in every lesson.
- You and other leaders share a tenacious determination to address issues relating to attendance among specific groups of pupils. Your efforts over the last couple of years have seen significant improvements in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. You are also realistic about the approaches you have used and the fact that there is still work to do to achieve attendance levels among these pupils that match the school's high expectations.
- High levels of challenge were seen in every lesson that you and I observed and this was also reflected in the books showing very strong progress over time. At the end of key stage 2, pupils' progress has consistently been very strong. However, the progress of the most able pupils in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 was not as strong as in previous years. You and other leaders are aware of this and are addressing the issues that lead to this drop in progress.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers continue to strengthen the quality of assessment in early years
- the persistent absence level of disadvantaged pupils continues to improve by maintaining the current firm approach to pursuing absence
- a sharp focus is maintained on increasing the progress of the most able pupils in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 to ensure that a greater proportion of these pupils achieve greater depth.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer or equivalent of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Birmingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Sandwell. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Richard Ellis  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I met with you, your deputy headteacher, other members of staff and a governor. You and I conducted lesson observations in every class and took the

opportunity to look at pupils' books together. I also spoke with a number of pupils about their learning and their experiences of being a pupil at your school. I looked at displays around the school and saw further examples of pupils' work. I scrutinised the single central record to check that it complies with the government's requirements. I also scrutinised current achievement information with key leaders. I held discussions with you as the designated safeguarding lead, looked at behaviour logs and reviewed attendance information. I reviewed the 25 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and spoke with a number of parents at the start of the school day.