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Mr Peter Chapman  
St George's Catholic Primary School  
Dennett Close  
Maghull  
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Merseyside  
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Dear Mr Chapman

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

Following my visit to the school on 31 October 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 April 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your dedicated staff work exceptionally hard to provide a good quality of education for the pupils in your care. Your warmth and passion to do the very best for every pupil in school, shines out in all that you do. It is greatly appreciated by the whole school community. Governors have a clear understanding of the strategic role that they have and work exceptionally hard to further develop the range of skills that they share. Governors' links with subject leaders are strong. As a consequence, governors have a clear understanding of the effectiveness of the school.

Pupils told me that they are very proud of their school. They particularly enjoy the opportunity to raise money for charity and are keen to discuss the many ways that they are able to do this. Behaviour in and around school is excellent. You create a warm, safe environment where pupils thrive. As a result, pupils' confidence shines out and they greet visitors and each other with respect and happiness. In class, there are very positive relationships between pupils and staff. Your pupils work hard and appreciate the opportunities given to them to develop their learning.

In the previous inspection, the inspector reported that teachers did not always provide pupils with enough opportunities to think, learn and work by themselves. In addition, teachers were not always ensuring that work was matched closely enough to pupils' needs, particularly for most-able pupils, so that they can reach the highest

levels. You have addressed these issues successfully. Pupils have the appropriate skills to undertake their work independently and have many opportunities to undertake activities with confidence and without direct support from staff. You have provided a broad range of training for staff to ensure that they provide work for the most able pupils that matches their needs. This has been successful. Your school information and results from external tests show that this group of pupils are making accelerated progress. By the time they reach the end of key stage 2 the results are at least in line with, and at times above, the national average.

The previous inspector also noted that pupils had too few opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in real-life situations. Again, you have dealt successfully with this issue. Teachers offer pupils a broad range of opportunities to apply learning in mathematics to their own experiences. Most recently, your youngest children and pupils counted pumpkins, weighing them and paying for them as part of a wider school project. Older pupils recently recorded times and calculated differences in their swimming trials.

We discussed two areas where further work is needed to support your school improvement. You have worked hard to develop the outdoor provision for children in Nursery and Reception. You recognise that further work is required to ensure that the high standard of provision which is found inside the classrooms is reflected outside. In addition, you are aware that, while leaders and staff have implemented a broad range of incentives to encourage strong attendance, attendance is still not as high as it could be. For example, too many pupils are still being removed from school to take unauthorised holidays. As a consequence, attendance levels for some pupils are lower than the national average.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

All safeguarding arrangements are of a high standard. Your records are up to date and thorough. All of the required checks take place to ensure that adults in school do not pose any threat to pupils.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Your staff are exceptionally vigilant. They take their safeguarding role very seriously and have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe.

Pupils understand the different forms of bullying and say that incidents are rare. They feel safe in school and know that staff will support them if they need help or advice. This view is shared by parents I spoke to, who greatly value the caring ethos that exists within school. A typical view, reflected by one parent was, 'The warm and friendly ethos of the school makes children and families welcome.'

### **Inspection findings**

- My first line of enquiry considered what leaders were doing to reverse the decline in pupils' attendance and to reduce the persistent absence from school. You have taken effective action by identifying the causes of absence. You noted that pupils

were being kept off school with very low-level medical issues. This has been resolved through effective communication with parents. Parents are now confident to send their children to school trusting that staff will deal with any issues relating to illness. You also identified that parents are removing their children from school to take holidays. Together with the governing body, you inform parents that you will not authorise such holidays and you have implemented fines when holidays have taken place. You have also successfully introduced a range of incentives to celebrate good attendance rates for pupils. This has been successful. Many pupils with historic, high levels of absence are now attending school more regularly. Nevertheless, unauthorised holidays are still being taken and, as a consequence, absence rates remain stubbornly above those seen nationally.

- My next line of enquiry looked at how leaders have developed teaching for the most able pupils in key stage 1. Leaders provide teachers with a broad range of training to ensure that they are clear on the expectations for this group of pupils. They have also created a detailed assessment system which allows teachers to check pupils' progress towards the challenging targets that they set for them. Leaders provide regular opportunities for staff to work together with other schools to ensure that assessment is accurate and that good practice is shared. Your efforts have been successful. Achievement over time for this group of pupils has increased considerably, with your most recent data from 2017 showing a substantial improvement on that achieved the previous year.
- I also considered ways in which leaders develop the curriculum within school. You provide your staff with a broad range of training opportunities. This ensures that a consistent approach to teaching is becoming evident throughout the school. Assessment is detailed and thorough. It enables teachers to have a clear understanding of the needs of each group in their class. As a consequence, pupils are provided with challenging learning which links closely to their own experiences. Pupils say that they particularly enjoy the opportunities to learn outdoors in their 'Nurture and Nature Nook'. They also value the residential visits that you provide for them.
- Pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects. The most recent results in 2017 show that pupils throughout school are achieving at levels which are consistently in line with, and often higher than, those seen nationally at expected levels. Work in pupils' books show that they make similar progress in other subjects. Pupils were excited to talk to me about their learning. Year 5 are currently involved in a project on World War One. This has given them an opportunity to visit a local church and analyse history from gravestones. The pupils have spoken with a local historian and shared their experiences with pupils from other local schools. They are very proud of this experience and can speak in depth about their learning. One pupil noted, 'We know so much more now, especially from information on gravestones.'

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- no groups of pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance

- outdoor provision for children in Nursery and Reception is further developed to ensure that:
  - the range of reading, writing and mathematical activities found indoors are reflected outdoors
  - children in Reception class have ease of access to outdoor provision.

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 Sefton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gill Pritchard  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and your mathematics subject leader. I also met with three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and a member of staff who deals with attendance and aspects of safeguarding. I had informal discussions with parents and a group of pupils to seek their views on the school. Finally, I met with teachers and teaching assistants.

I visited most classes in the school and was accompanied by you during this tour. Examples of pupils' work were scrutinised and I observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and as they moved around school. A number of documents were reviewed, including your record of checks on the suitability of staff, the school's self-evaluation form, the school improvement plan, assessment information, behaviour logs and attendance records. I also took account of 21 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 15 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 15 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. I considered information posted on the school's website.

The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.