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Mrs Kate Crees
Headteacher
St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Shoreham-by-Sea
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Dear Mrs Crees

Short inspection of St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Shoreham-by-Sea

Following my visit to the school on 7 June 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 the school was judged to be good in March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

Following your appointment, you have worked tirelessly to improve pupils' education. When you know something needs changing you go all out for it! You are well organised, thorough and passionate about the school and its community. Parents, governors and staff value your leadership and understand that you know your school well. They appreciate your honesty about the school and know you uphold its Christian values. One parent said, 'The headteacher has brought community spirit back after a number of years in the wilderness.' Staff are proud to work at the school. They value your leadership and fully support you in your desire to develop the school still further.

Alongside your deputy, you have given subject leaders confidence in their work. They are enthusiastic and have developed their subjects systematically, training other staff and sensibly using expert advice where necessary. This has led to improvements in the quality of the curriculum, coverage of subjects, teachers' knowledge and pupils' desire to learn more. Leaders are developing links between the skills learned in English and mathematics and the work in other curriculum areas. This is happening more quickly in English than in mathematics and is not yet consistent throughout all years.

Pupils enjoy school and talk positively about what they are learning. They enjoy the topics they study and find the work interesting. One pupil said, 'Teachers make you

confident to go further and do things you haven't done before.' Pupils appreciate the support the teachers give them and know that they will get help if they need it. Pupils say that teachers expect them to work hard and challenge them to do well. They appreciate all the activities on offer, clubs, fundraising and responsibilities such as playtime buddies and members of the school council. They are particularly proud of the large sum of money they raised to restock the school library. Pupils' behaviour is very good. They play together cooperatively and enjoy the playtime activities provided for them, such as races and the den. Behaviour in class is excellent. Pupils persevere, concentrate well, are polite and enjoy conversing with each other and adults.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, your leadership and the staff. They recognise that their children are safe, happy and well behaved and would recommend the school to others. They appreciate your approachability and knowing that they can trust staff to resolve any issues quickly. Parents particularly value the care and support you give to children when they start school, if they have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities or difficulties.

The previous inspection report asked for the teaching of writing to improve by ensuring that work was hard enough for the most able, that punctuation was taught clearly, the presentation of books was improved and teaching assistants gave help at the right level to move pupils on more quickly. You have successfully introduced the systematic teaching of spelling and grammar. This has led to improved expectations by all. Pupils now use spelling and grammar more confidently in their writing. Standards have risen in grammar, punctuation and spelling across the school and they are well above national average by the end of Year 6.

Presentation has improved and pupils say that frequent handwriting practice has helped them to be proud of the way they write. The topic books in Years 5 and 6 are particularly attractive. Teaching assistants support pupils' learning effectively. They are knowledgeable about pupils' learning needs and carefully tailor their support to individual pupils. The new approach to writing introduced by the deputy headteacher and the literacy team has been very effective in raising standards in key stages 1 and 2. You rightly recognise that there is still some work to do in early years to ensure that every opportunity to write is maximised.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have made sure that systems for safeguarding are thorough. Your office staff are conscientious about keeping your documents secure. Alongside your governors, you monitor safeguarding closely and are confident that records are detailed and of a high quality. Training in all aspects of safeguarding is up to date. Adults know how to report concerns and you have been vigilant in making referrals to other agencies such as social services when needed. Your work with a range of outside agencies is effective for your pupils and families. You support families well and parents and carers appreciate the help you give them.

Pupils feel safe. You ensure that the school is a safe place and all the necessary checks and risk assessments are in place. You frequently teach your pupils about online safety and regularly inform parents about it through letters and workshops. The curriculum includes reminders for pupils at the start of each half term. You also respond to emerging issues. Pupils were able to tell me that they had recently discussed gaming and they knew how to keep themselves safe online when taking part in a computer game.

Pupils say that there is no bullying. This is confirmed by school records and the parents' views. Pupils understand the difference between bullying and arguments. They feel equipped to resolve minor incidents themselves. They are confident that they can go to any member of staff if the situation is more serious, knowing they will get immediate help.

Attendance has improved to above national average due to your vigilance and the systems and rewards you have put in place. Attendance for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is closer to national average than it was at this time last year and persistent absence has halved.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on safeguarding arrangements for the school; how well the areas for improvement from the last inspection had been tackled; the effectiveness of support for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities; boys' achievement and the quality of the curriculum.
- The special educational needs coordinator has put comprehensive systems in place to ensure that both disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are monitored carefully. This has led to the creation of programmes to meet their individual needs. Parents appreciate that they are now more closely involved with their child's learning plans than they were in the past. Investment in new assessment systems has ensured that staff monitor progress effectively and set meaningful targets for the next steps in learning. Good training for teachers and teaching assistants has ensured that they have a better understanding of pupils' needs. Disadvantaged pupils are now making progress in line with all others in the school. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have shown considerable improvement in their progress in the past year, particularly in reading at key stage 1.
- The use of a computer program to encourage pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to write has been particularly successful. Alongside phonic support and staff encouragement, pupils are persevering with their writing, writing more and using a wider vocabulary. This has resulted in progress that is in line with their peers, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Leaders rightly identified that, in all years, boys were not making as much progress as girls. You have used writing as a vehicle to excite and involve boys in their wider learning. Led by the deputy headteacher, you have developed phonics and reading, which are a strength in the school. You have then used the focus on quality reading texts to enrich writing. The immersive writing programme has

been very effective for every child in the school. You have ensured that there is an exciting start to writing activities using quality text and a finished purpose for the pieces of work. One boy said, 'I like writing because you can express yourself. We are doing writing about exciting stuff.' One group of pupils particularly enjoyed taking their poetry out to the local town and reading it in public. This approach has led to a significant improvement in writing in greater depth across the school, particularly in Years 5 and 6. All boys are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Boys in early years have been encouraged to write through boy-friendly topics such as 'Knights and Castles'. During the inspection, a small writing group was well supported by adults in the classroom. However, there are missed opportunities for pupils who do not write often enough as part of the wide range of activities and experiences on offer to them in the classroom and outside. Teachers have provided a range of activities to support pupils in developing their letter formation, although many pupils are not secure in how to form their letters. Adults do not expect enough of the most able writers in early years.
- Pupils really enjoy the curriculum. They appreciate special days like careers day and pirate day where learning is experienced in a cross-curricular way, often with support from parents in the community. Parents appreciate their involvement in these special days and are happy to support the excitement, for example by delivering messages from mermaids to their children. During the inspection, pupils were successfully using a range of skills, from reading to geographical skills, as part of their pirate day.
- Topics involve history, geography and science. They are interesting for the pupils and appeal to all, including the boys. Pupils record their work in attractive, well-presented topic books. These show the wide range of learning activities they experience. Where English skills have been taught, and pupils use those skills for further work in their topics, the standard of writing is improved. However, there are only a very few examples where skills learned in mathematics are used in topic work. Teachers do not check that all pupils can use the skills they have learned in English and mathematics in all subjects. Pupils know the way their school likes them to learn and the school's values are an active part of their everyday learning. They are proud to show work where they have persevered or cooperated.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff have high expectations for the most able writers in early years and the opportunities for pupils to write are maximised
- teachers use the skills taught in English and mathematics in other subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Corbett
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, your deputy headteacher and subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, business manager, six governors and a group of pupils. I spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone. I also considered 17 responses to the staff questionnaire and 51 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, along with seven letters from parents and one from the secondary school. I analysed a range of documents, including leaders' self-evaluation and the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding checks, policies and procedures.