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Sean Cranitch  
Headteacher  
St Patrick's Catholic Primary School  
Holmes Road  
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NW5 3AH

Dear Mr Cranitch

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

Following my visit to the school on 3 March 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 May 2011.

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

Since the previous inspection, school leaders have ensured that the standard of education provided remains good. You have the highest aspirations for all pupils, which are shared by all staff, including governors. Your passion and commitment are driving the school's ambition to be outstanding. This is articulated in the school improvement planning. You seek continuous improvement, as outlined in the school's vision that 'St Patrick's Catholic Primary School will be a model of educational excellence', and the challenging targets you set for all pupils and staff.

Governors are well informed because you are transparent and honest about how well the school is performing. This is also supported by their regular, independent checks, including focused visits to the school. They know how the pupil premium funding is spent and the impact this is having on these pupils. The achievement of these pupils, as well as all other groups in Key Stage 2 is undeniably rapid, particularly in reading and writing. Equally, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was well above the national average in 2015.

The appointment of the deputy headteacher in September 2014 has strengthened the capacity of the school to secure further improvements. She is, according to one member of staff's statement, 'an outstanding role model who provides excellent support for all'. Together with other leaders, she provides effective coaching and mentoring for all colleagues. This has resulted in previous gaps in achievement between significant groups closing rapidly. You have also developed strong

partnerships with other schools including a teaching school. These partnerships secure cross-fertilisation of outstanding practice and the opportunity to moderate the new assessment procedures to secure greater accuracy.

These key drivers have secured good progress towards addressing the recommendations identified at the time of the last inspection. The most-able pupils achieve well in Key Stage 2, particularly in their writing. Your uncompromising ambition to secure success for all has resulted in sustained rapid progress across Key Stage 2 for many groups of pupils. Your own assessment information confirms that the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally is closing in Key Stage 1. Nevertheless, attainment in Key Stage 1 remains below average; progress is slower in this key stage across all three core subjects. Furthermore, the most-able pupils do not achieve well enough in Key Stage 1. The joint observations that I undertook with you and the deputy headteacher confirm that weaknesses remain in the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2. These pupils are not provided with sufficient challenge in mathematics to make them think hard about their work. They are not given enough opportunities to apply basic literacy skills in their writing.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

School leaders, including governors, have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. The safeguarding policy is up to date and reflects all the new duties required of schools. Staff are vigilant and flag up any concerns they may have, which they diligently report to you as the designated safeguarding lead. You work closely with external agencies and keep detailed records of any pupils who are potentially vulnerable or at risk to ensure their well-being. Pupils' attendance is systematically tracked and follow-up work to support families and their children is put in place. This includes identified members of staff who are the points of contact for families who may need support. Attendance, overall, is improving for all key groups of pupils, but remains average. Pupils told me that they feel safe in school. They appreciate having a special person they can go to if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils know how to stay safe, including when using the internet. You are building engagement and providing parents with vital information on how they can keep their children safe through e-safety workshops.

### **Inspection findings**

- Senior and middle leaders have a relentless focus on making sure that all teachers provide pupils with exciting and relevant learning activities. The curriculum is carefully tailored to the needs, interests and abilities of pupils. An important part of this in literacy is storytelling, in both English and in the pupils' home languages. This fires pupils' imagination, provides a context for their learning, and enables pupils to develop key literacy skills. It also motivates pupils to want to learn and find out more for themselves.
- You have recruited a school artist in residence. This enables pupils to engage in myriad creative opportunities to develop key literacy skills, including speaking and listening, and to grow in their personal development through

working collaboratively. These activities successfully promote their spiritual development through reflection about their own learning and appreciating the beauty and power of art. All pupils learn to play a musical instrument confidently with a specialist music teacher. You make sure that pupils who may not have space to play their instruments at home have time to practise their instruments before school in the playground.

- Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and any pupil in danger of underachieving is quickly identified and interventions are swiftly put in place. This includes an additional programme to promote pupils' phonics skills (phonics refers to letters and the sounds that they make), developing their comprehension, and focused interventions for mathematics.
- Leaders have a clear and regular cycle of observations which are closely aligned to the targets set for teachers following any monitoring of their performance. Leaders use this information to check the impact of their actions. This information is also used to identify further training and support so that all staff, including teaching assistants, continue to improve and develop. With senior leaders, middle leaders jointly observe the areas for which they are responsible. Senior leaders model how to monitor teaching and learning, as well as providing effective feedback. This coaching model works very well and builds further capacity for improvement.
- You have recently focused on making sure that teachers assess pupils' progress accurately in lessons. This is stronger in some year groups than others. Work sampling confirmed that, in Key Stage 1, work is not always pitched at the right level of challenge in mathematics, especially for the most-able pupils. Some pupils repeat work that they can already do and understand. Equally, although pupils are provided with some valuable opportunities to write at length, these are too infrequent to enable them to use and apply their literacy skills well enough.

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

Leaders and governors should ensure that Key Stage 1 teachers provide:

- further challenge and depth in learning for the most-able pupils in mathematics as soon as they know and understand their work
- pupils with more opportunities to write for a purpose and at length so that they can apply and practise their literacy skills.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Westminster and the Director of Children's Services for Camden. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

The inspector observed teaching and learning in the Year 1 to 3 classes. These observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. Meetings were held with leaders, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, and four other governors, a representative from the local authority, and a group of pupils. A number of documents were scrutinised including the school's own evaluation of pupils' performance, those relating to arrangements for safeguarding, the school's plans for development and information about pupils' progress.