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Mrs Laura White  
St Anselm's Catholic Primary School  
Littlebrook Manor Way  
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Dear Mrs White

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

Following my visit to the school on 8 December 2015, 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 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Working closely with the deputy headteacher, staff and governors, you have continued to improve the school very effectively. This is a happy, vibrant and successful school, with clear, positive values. Its Christian foundation contributes to its welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. Staff have high morale. Teachers and teaching assistants usually have high expectations of pupils. They engage their pupils well. Pupils enjoy their learning – making good progress in English and mathematics. Parents are understandably pleased. One aptly described the school as, 'A good, well run school with a caring ethos well focused on learning and discipline.'

At the time of the last inspection, a recommendation was for the school to improve its work in engaging with parents. You have taken this very seriously. You recognise parents are their children's first educators. Parents are now commonly involved in the life of the school, working alongside staff. Communications between home and school are regular and positive. Attendance at parents' evenings is much better. One parent wrote, 'The school has a truly family feel and parents are encouraged and welcomed to contribute to school life. Parents are given lots of information.' At the same time, you remain keen to ensure that all, rather than most, parents engage with the school. You recognise that, just occasionally, parents express dissatisfaction and are working to improve their experiences in these cases.

You evaluate the school honestly and accurately. If there are notable weaknesses, you sort them out. The school has a clear sense of direction, reflected in leaders' strategic planning. Leaders gather and analyse effectively useful information they receive about pupils' attendance and outcomes in English and mathematics. However, in other aspects, including pupils' performance in other subjects, staff do not check as thoroughly. Similarly, staff are less certain on how well pupils are developing their understanding of fundamental British values such as tolerance and democracy. This means the school does not design and target further developments with razor-sharp precision.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The school has meticulous procedures for keeping pupils safe. You ensure that staff are regularly and appropriately trained in safeguarding and child protection procedures. Pupils who need it receive appropriate, timely support. Staff inspect frequently the security of the site. Proper, thorough checks are made on staff and all others who come into contact with the pupils, when they are recruited. Records of these checks are well maintained and up-to-date. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding carefully checks procedures. School staff understand well their duties to prevent radicalisation. Pupils receive useful teaching about how to be safe in various situations, including when online. They feel safe and secure in their school.

### **Inspection findings**

- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics throughout the school. They consistently reach above average standards in the national tests at the end of each key stage. Pupils show particularly strong prowess in their writing. They are keen to write at length and do so interestingly and with accuracy.
- In reading, although pupils do well, standards are not quite as high as they are in writing and mathematics. The school, noting this, has made several positive changes to the way it promotes reading, including setting up a new library. Phonics (linking letters and sounds) is taught methodically and pupils do well in the national screening check in Year 1. Nevertheless, these changes have not gone quite far enough. Reading does not currently have a high enough profile in the school. Class 'book corners' are useful but not enough of a feature to be very inspiring.
- The pupils who read to me did so confidently and accurately. They showed good levels of comprehension. They were pleased that they have many opportunities to read to school staff and to their parents. They sounded out tricky words correctly, showing a good grasp of phonics. However, their reading books were too easy. One pupil rightly commented, 'There are no new words or hard words.' Pupils are capable of meeting a greater challenge in their reading.
- Teaching throughout the school is lively and well-focused. It interests and engages pupils well. Teachers generally plan well for the different needs of pupils in their classes, including those who have special educational needs.

- Staff assess pupils' progress in English and mathematics carefully. You are currently working with other local schools to develop new approaches to assessment. These are at an early stage but are helpful in enabling teachers to ask themselves valuable questions about which pupils are progressing well, or not so well, and why.
- Pupils entitled to additional support through pupil premium funding achieve well in English and mathematics. The school spends the funding sensibly, including on the popular 'wake and shake' breakfast club. You recognise the need to find different ways of evaluating how well this money is spent, not relying as heavily on the published information about pupils' progress in English and mathematics.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. They make good progress. Staff plan lessons well, using effective assessment systems to guide them. Children enjoy choosing activities indoors and outdoors. Rightly, you are providing suitable training for staff who are new to this age group. You are also sensibly considering whether the teaching of phonics in Reception could be differently organised to better challenge higher attaining children.
- Pupils are happy and polite. They behave very well indeed. They listen attentively to staff in lessons and work well together and individually. They take pride in their work and school. The playground is a happy and safe place. Many pupils take on particular responsibilities and do so willingly. I noted some older pupils showing considerable responsibility and care, when leading younger pupils in from playtime, carefully helping them avoid puddles.
- The rate of pupils' attendance at school is consistently high across all year groups. The school checks on any prolonged absences carefully.
- Pupils enjoy a broad and engaging curriculum, which includes religious education as a centrepiece. The recent, carefully considered introduction of a commercial planning system has helped spark extra life into many subjects. One pupil commented, 'There are lots of fun things!' Pupils sang well in preparation for Christmas events. There is a good range of clubs too, including sports, arts and science activities.
- Members of staff who are leaders of particular subjects are developing their work well. They are very reflective and carry out useful work to raise standards further. Subject leaders also recognise the need to find better ways of checking how well pupils are doing in a wide range of subjects and areas of school life.
- The governing body is well organised and carries out its work effectively. Its members know the school very well. They ask well-informed and challenging questions of you and other school leaders.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- outcomes for pupils are analysed and evaluated in subjects and areas beyond English and mathematics, so that further improvements can be sharply targeted
- the profile of reading is raised further across the school and that pupils routinely read suitably demanding books.

Yours sincerely

Robin Hammerton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I visited lessons in all classes in the school, jointly with the headteacher. I looked at pupils' work. I talked to pupils and heard some of them read. I observed at playtimes. I held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, members of staff and the governing body. I had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I took account of the 23 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also considered confidential responses from members of staff to their online questionnaire. I evaluated documents, including the school improvement and development plans, information about pupils' progress and minutes of meetings.