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Mr Simon Charnock  
Headteacher  
St Andrew's CofE Primary School, Over Hulton  
Crescent Avenue  
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Bolton  
Lancashire  
BL5 1EN

Dear Mr Charnock

### **Short inspection of St Andrew's CofE Primary School, Over Hulton**

Following my visit to the school on 23 February 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 St Andrew's was judged to be good in November 2010.

Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have taken up post.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Despite considerable changes to the senior leadership team in recent years, the strengths identified by inspectors in 2010 have not diminished. Pupils continue to behave well and work hard. They benefit from warm and trusting relationships with the adults who care for them. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their above-average attendance rates and excellent punctuality. They enter school happily, wear their uniforms with pride and relish all that school has to offer.

You have taken on the mantle of headship seamlessly from your predecessor. You have won the trust of staff because you have managed change sensitively. Morale is high and everyone is following your lead and guidance. Whole-school strategies for teaching and learning are evident in all classrooms.

No time has been wasted in tackling the shortcomings identified at the previous inspection. Teaching is improving. Teachers are equipped with the right skills and knowledge to help pupils learn because of the relevant training they receive. Your frequent checks on teaching mean that teachers know what they need to do to improve. This is bearing fruit. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, which encourages them to do their best. All teachers use the whole-school marking policy effectively to pick up

any muddled thinking and to shape future lessons. Classrooms showcase the exciting and rich learning opportunities that pupils encounter each day. Pupils' achievement is improving strongly across the school. They are well prepared for the next stage of their school career.

You have forged ahead in developing the role of other leaders. Everyone is having a greater influence on teaching than in the past. Subject leaders know more about their areas of responsibility because they visit classrooms and review pupils' books. All leaders are having a say in how subjects are planned across the school.

Most of the parents who shared their views are very positive about all aspects of the school's work. Almost all would recommend the school to other parents.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

You ensure that all staff at St Andrew's, regardless of their role, are well informed about the latest safeguarding requirements. Staff know their duties because of frequent and up-to-date training. External expertise and national training packages are used well. This means that staff are fully equipped to spot any sign that pupils may be at harm. Concerns are followed up rigorously and recorded diligently. Your checks on all adults who work in, or visit, the school are thorough and meet statutory requirements.

The pupils I spoke to, and those who completed the online questionnaire, say they are safe and happy in school. They think behaviour is mostly good, but not always perfect. This is due to some falling-out between friendship groups, name-calling and occasional incidents of bullying. Your behaviour records confirm this to be true. Bullying does occur from time to time. However, your records show that action is taken whenever you are made aware of any pupil who is suffering harassment. Pupils say these rare incidents of unkindness do not spoil their sense of safety. They are very confident that adults will listen to their problems and sort out their concerns. Almost all of the parents who shared their views agree that pupils are safe. Most feel that bullying is dealt with effectively.

You are helping pupils to keep themselves safe through the learning programmes on offer. This is enhanced by opportunities to learn from external experts such as the police, the fire service and national charities. Pupils are gaining a good understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet and mobile phones. They are developing an awareness of how to stay healthy. They know the dangers associated with smoking and the benefits of choosing a balanced diet.

### **Inspection findings**

- My findings came as no surprise to you, the governors or the staff. Although everyone is proud of what has been achieved so far, all accept that there is still scope for improvement. You know the school well because you are checking teaching and pupils' progress frequently. You understand what needs to happen next to lift teaching and raise pupils' achievement. Action is already underway to

tackle the relative weaknesses in mathematics. Your improvement plan is detailed, realistic and setting St Andrew's on the right course for future success.

- The governing body has a good understanding of the school because members visit frequently and receive quality information from you. Governors are generous with their time, volunteering to hear readers and attending parents' evenings. Their work is going a long way in cementing the strong partnership between school, the community and the Church. Nevertheless, governors are not keeping a close enough eye on their statutory duties, particularly when it comes to updating important school policies.
- Pupils' achievement is stronger than at the previous inspection in most areas of the school. The strengths in reading have not wavered and pupils' gains in writing are improving each year. More pupils are achieving the highest levels by the time they finish Year 2 and Year 6.
- Most children enter Reception ready for the challenges that lie ahead. They gain a good grounding in the early years. The proportion gaining a good level of development by the end of Reception is consistently above average and increasing over time. Nonetheless, boys are still lagging behind their female classmates.
- Almost all pupils have a good grasp of the sounds that letters make (phonics) by the end of Year 1. They enjoy continued success across Key Stage 1 so that standards by the end of Year 2 are above the national average.
- These positive outcomes are typically mirrored in the Year 6 results. However, standards fell in 2015 and were broadly average. This was solely due to pupils' weaker performance in mathematics. Standards in reading and writing improved again last year. They are above average.
- Staff absence goes some way to explaining pupils' weaker progress in mathematics in 2015. However, pupils' gains in mathematics have stuttered over the years. Improvements made in one year are not always sustained in the next. This is because pupils' mathematical skills are built on shakier foundations than their reading and writing abilities.
- The new subject leader is well aware of the shortcomings in mathematics teaching. He is seizing every opportunity to raise pupils' achievement. This is beginning to reap rewards. More pupils are working within the levels expected for their age. Pupils' books show that teachers are aiming high to reach the new National Curriculum expectations.
- Nonetheless, mathematics teaching is not always hitting the mark. Some pupils face work that is too difficult because teachers are racing ahead with new learning before pupils have the skills to cope. Pupils are not becoming fluent mathematicians because they have too few opportunities to solve more complex problems.
- Disadvantaged pupils are forging ahead in their reading and writing skills. They make the same progress as others in the school and nationally in these subjects. They did less well in mathematics last year. The same is also true for girls. However, the information for current pupils, backed up by the evidence in their books, shows this is no longer the case. Achievement gaps are closing quickly.
- Improvements in teaching are setting pupils up well to become resilient learners who are willing to persevere even when they face challenges. The Christian values of St Andrew's underpin pupils' positive attitudes to learning, their friendly manner and the respect they show to others. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and

cultural development is a shining beacon in your happy school. Opportunities for pupils to find out about other faiths and to shoulder different responsibilities within school are preparing them well for life in modern Britain.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' mathematical understanding is secure before teachers move them onto the next stage of learning
- pupils have greater opportunities to become fluent mathematicians by solving a broader range of complex problems
- governors keep a closer eye on their statutory duties so that school policies and procedures are updated in a timely manner.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner, the Director of Children's Services for Bolton Council and the Director of Education for the Diocese of Manchester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Olsson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and a group of four staff. I held discussions with three governors, a representative from the local authority and a group of older boys and girls. We visited every classroom to talk to pupils, observe them at work and to look at their books. I chatted to a small number of parents at the start of the school day. I took account of the 38 responses on Parent View, including the 26 free text responses. I considered 11 responses from the staff online questionnaire. I also evaluated the seven online responses completed by pupils.

I considered a range of school information including your checks on teaching, your self-evaluation and your current action plan. We discussed your assessments of pupils' progress across the school. I evaluated safeguarding procedures including your policies to keep children safe, staff training and the safeguarding checks on adults who work in and visit the school. I also considered the records you keep of any concerns raised about pupils' safety.