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Mrs Kathryn Keen
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Dear Mrs Keen

Short inspection of Warrington St Ann's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 September 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education since the last inspection. You provide highly effective leadership. You and other leaders have established a culture in which every person is valued and respected. You know the pupils and their families very well, which means that you can provide targeted and specific support. You and other leaders have high expectations and are ambitious. You have a relentless focus on continual improvement, are highly reflective and constantly evaluate the impact of any decisions. You have established an inclusive school and this is reflected in pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour. This attitude can be summed up by the comment of one pupil who said, 'St Ann's accepts people for who they are and who they want to be.'

After the previous inspection, the school was asked to raise attainment in mathematics and writing. You were also asked to remove inconsistencies in teaching. Pupils' progress and attainment have risen in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in 2016. Your systematic and analytical approach to identifying school development priorities has ensured that all groups of pupils make at least expected progress and a good proportion make more than expected progress. The most able disadvantaged pupils do not attain the highest levels because they have had to make much more progress from the time they started at school compared with other pupils nationally. The effectiveness of teaching has improved. Teachers assess pupils' understanding throughout lessons and change

their questions and activities according to pupils' responses. There are a few pupils who do not engage throughout the lesson, which slows their learning.

St Ann's is an inclusive school. Staff work very well with new arrivals from other countries, and this group of pupils makes very good progress. There is good coverage in the curriculum of other cultures and religions. However, the curriculum and school policies do not fully promote all of the protected characteristics identified in the 2010 Equality Act.

Safeguarding is effective.

The safeguarding of children is a strength. You do not shy away from difficult discussions with parents, staff and outside agencies to ensure that each pupil is protected. Staff are vigilant. For example, governors and staff have demonstrated that they are highly aware of risks of extreme behaviour such as forced marriage, radicalisation and female genital mutilation.

Staff thoroughly record and follow up any incidents or concerns to make sure they do not lead to a pupil being endangered. Pupils' attendance has increased year on year and staff take absence seriously and investigate to make sure the absences are not safeguarding issues. Staff follow up on pupils who may be travelling abroad for long periods or may potentially be missing from education. They also follow up behaviour and bullying incidents to make sure that they are treated and tackled seriously. They thoroughly check staff, governors, volunteers and visitors to make sure they have the clearance, background and qualifications to work with pupils. Staff, including those new to the school, are well trained in safeguarding. Leaders frequently update governors' and staff's knowledge and skills regarding child protection.

Inspection findings

- In 2015, pupils at the end of Years 1 and 2 were below average in their ability to use phonics to read words. There was also a drop in the proportion of pupils making expected progress in reading across key stage 2. You and other leaders meticulously analysed the results and identified some of the causes for the drop in standards and noted that the results were not meeting your high expectations. You introduced a number of effective reading programmes, including an online reading system which is popular with pupils. You initiated the idea of 'reading champions' so that pupils could inspire others to read. You also changed some of the ways that reading was taught.
- In 2016 there was a significant rise in reading standards across the school which, given pupils' starting points, denotes at least good progress. Pupils said that they read more frequently. The most able disadvantaged pupils can compare authors, read confidently and can understand the idea of plot and characters' motives. Lower-ability pupils use their knowledge of sounds to break down unfamiliar words to be able to read them. They think about the texts they read and answer questions that make them think about the

different characters and how authors use different sentences and words to create an effect.

- There was no pupil premium strategy published online, at the start of the inspection, regarding the spending of external funding to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. However, the school has a clear plan in place for the spending of the grant. You know this group of pupils very well and have found ways of challenging the most able of them. Some pupils work with secondary teachers and some with specialist teachers or go to specifically designed events. As a result, they make good progress from their starting points. Leaders are already working successfully to raise their attainment further by using the pupil premium grant to accelerate their progress. The published assessment information could be read as though disadvantaged pupils attain below others nationally. However, when I considered their starting points, it was clear that they make at least good progress.
- Leaders have not made sure that all of the protected characteristics identified in the 2010 Equality Act are promoted through the curriculum. Out of the 23 people studied, for example, in the school's 'cultural pathway', 21 are western heritage men and only two are women. This lack of equality is also seen in other aspects of the curriculum. In the early years, boys are pictured as superheroes and in adventure/discovery roles yet girls are mainly pictured in pretty dresses instead of having more positive role models to emulate. The curriculum, such as Vikings in history and 'The highwayman' in English, shows women in subservient roles instead of promoting a more balanced view of women and teaching about significant women authors, composers, artists, inventors and pioneers. During breaktime on the day of inspection, for most of the time, boys played separately and socialised very little with the girls. At lunchtime, however, pupils mixed and sat together, regardless of gender. By the end of the inspection you were already considering ways of changing the curriculum.
- Parents, staff and pupils said that behaviour is good most of the time and is managed well. Any incidents are taken seriously and sorted out quickly. In class, pupils respond well to adults and get on with their work quickly. In some classes, a few pupils quietly become disengaged and lose concentration. This slows their learning.
- New pupils from other countries are welcomed to this inclusive school and immediately begin to make rapid progress. The pupils I spoke with told me that anyone would be welcomed at St Ann's, regardless of racial background, gender, gender identity, sexuality, special educational needs or culture.
- You have a very accurate view of the strengths and areas to develop in the school. In the lessons we observed together your analysis of the strengths and aspects to improve were identical to mine. Your evaluation is honest and highly reflective, which means that you are continually looking at different ways to further improve the school. You provide excellent leadership and develop the school's capacity for further improvement.
- The local authority provides support and guidance at the school's request. It has helped the school, for example, with several issues concerning child

protection and safeguarding, enabling staff to protect children. As the school is low priority for the local authority, the impact of its work is limited.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the curriculum includes good coverage of all protected characteristics identified in the 2010 Equality Act and teachers challenge gender stereotypes
- the most able disadvantaged pupils make accelerated progress and more of them exceed the standard for their age
- pupils maximise their learning by being on task and engaged throughout the lesson

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

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The focus of this inspection was to identify how well the school promotes equality, how well phonics and reading are taught and to find out how leaders use external funding to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

I observed teaching in most classes. I considered a range of evidence, including the school's latest assessment information, the school improvement plan, leaders' self-evaluation, pupils' work and behaviour logs.

I met with three members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority.

I met with a group of pupils to hear them read and to discuss their thoughts about the school. I also considered the responses of 26 pupils to Ofsted's online survey, and the views of pupils I met at breaktime.

I read through the nine comments placed by parents on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and considered the school's own survey of parents.

I met with a range of staff, including you, senior leaders, newly and recently qualified teachers. I considered the views of 39 members of staff who completed the online survey.