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Dear Mrs Day

Short inspection of St Anthony's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 November 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 February 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since joining the school, you have developed the roles of senior leaders and made sure that they play a full part in driving improvements to teaching, learning and assessment, and the curriculum. You have also increased the role that middle leaders play in securing developments within their areas of responsibility. You were quick to take effective action to improve pupils' literacy and mathematics outcomes.

You have made sure that the school continues to be a happy and friendly place. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly developed. Pupils in Year 6 are very eager to help the younger ones as prefects and house captains. Play leaders take their roles seriously. They help to ensure that breaktimes are enjoyable and no one is left out. Pupils' caring attitudes are encouraged strongly, for example through frequent charity fund-raising.

You make sure that pupils learn about life in modern Britain. They learn about democratic processes, for example through the election of the school council representatives. Pupils' suggestions help improve the school. You have introduced the 'golden table' award to recognise pupils who demonstrate the school's 'CARE' values of consideration, achievement, respect and effort. Pupils asked thoughtful questions about local community issues during a recent visit to the school made by the local Member of Parliament. Last year, pupils in Year 5 wrote letters to the Prime Minister on the subject of fair-trade agreements. During the school's annual 'one

world' week, pupils learned about each other's cultures, promoting respect and tolerance of differences. In the online survey, the very large majority of parents and carers confirmed that their children were happy at the school.

Leaders have taken steps to address the priorities for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. You have introduced new systems to make sure that teachers check pupils' academic outcomes accurately and regularly, including in the early years provision. Working in partnership with other local schools, you have made sure that teachers measure the standards of pupils' work in a consistent way. As a result, teachers know how well all groups of pupils achieve and set tasks that are carefully matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils who need additional help are identified quickly and given support. Leaders have made sure that teachers follow the school's approach to giving feedback on pupils' work so that it is effective and consistently applied. This helps pupils to improve their work further.

The previous inspection found that there was more work to do to motivate pupils to learn. You have seized the opportunity presented by the national curriculum revisions to develop the curriculum and make learning exciting. The curriculum is enriched with well-selected outings and visits to local places of interest. Subject events, including the recent 'science of flying' and 'mathematical code-cracking and encrypting' days effectively encourage pupils to deepen their understanding of key concepts. As a result, pupils' outcomes are improving. Recent action to improve the fluency of pupils' handwriting is helping them to present their work neatly. Work to improve the accuracy of pupils' spelling is not as effective when teachers miss pointing out spelling errors in words that pupils are expected to know.

Discussions during philosophy sessions encourage pupils to think carefully about ideas. Pupils are confident to ask questions. They listen respectfully to one another, and contribute sensibly to discussions. All pupils from Reception to Year 6 learn French. In Year 5, pupils put their knowledge into practice by writing penfriend letters and visiting the town of Bethune in France.

The senior leadership team has taken very effective action to make sure that the importance of regular attendance is understood by the whole school community. Since 2014, rates of attendance have been consistently above national averages and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is lower than that found nationally.

Safeguarding is effective.

The culture of safeguarding in the school is strong. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders make sure that training for staff takes place regularly and that staff receive updates throughout the school year. Recent safeguarding training has included witchcraft and juju, the 'Prevent' duty and how to identify possible warning signs that a pupil may be at risk from female genital mutilation or child sexual exploitation. Staff understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe and have a good knowledge of the most up-to-date guidance. They know what the school

expects them to do should they have any concerns. Records show that swift action is taken should the need arise. Leaders with specific safeguarding responsibilities work closely with outside agencies to safeguard pupils' well-being.

Leaders provide advice and guidance for parents to help them to keep their children safe. They organise workshops for parents on how to keep safe when using computers and the school's newsletters often make safeguarding suggestions.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of contexts. Staff regularly discuss with them how to keep safe. The oldest pupils know how to recognise different types of abuse, including child sexual exploitation and emotional mistreatment. They know who to turn to should any concerns arise. Pupils in Year 6 recited to me the telephone number of a children's safeguarding hotline. Pupils know what steps to take to keep safe when using computers. They know not to put personal information online and what constitutes a secure password. Pupils and parents are confident that any incidents of bullying are very rare, as the school's records show. They are very confident that staff will help them resolve any problems.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and where improvement is needed. Leaders have rightly focused on improving pupils' writing skills throughout the school, including in the early years provision. Together with senior and subject leaders, you have introduced a range of effective initiatives to raise standards in writing.
- In order to inspire pupils to write creatively, leaders have introduced thought-provoking activities that capture pupils' interest. Teachers plan regular opportunities for pupils to write in a wide variety of different styles and for different purposes. During 'genius time', pupils can choose for themselves what they wish to write about, fostering pupils' independence and research skills. Across the curriculum, teachers make sure that pupils write regularly. For example, in science, pupils write accounts of their investigations and use scientific vocabulary carefully.
- Training for staff is helping to raise expectations of the quality of pupils' handwriting. Work in pupils' books is typically neatly presented and fluent. Teachers now check pupils' spelling more frequently than in the past. However, the impact on improving pupils' spelling is diminished when inaccuracies are not identified sharply.
- You are ambitious to increase the proportion of children who reach above-average standards in writing at the end of the Reception Year. Following recent changes to the curriculum for writing in the early years, teachers plan more regular opportunities for children to write than in the past. They plan individual writing sessions for children that build on what they know and can do already. Work in children's learning journals shows that the most able children write simple sentences, using finger spaces and punctuation correctly.
- The most able pupils in Years 1 to 6 are challenged effectively to develop their writing skills as 'digital writing leaders' and in writing the school's online blog. They also select the weekly winner of the 'best writer' competition, motivating the

whole school to write regularly. In national assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in 2016, provisional assessments suggest that considerably more pupils exceeded the standards expected in writing for their age compared with pupils nationally.

- As a result of improvements to the curriculum in mathematics, disadvantaged pupils typically make similar good progress compared with other pupils at the school. Teachers plan tasks that are carefully matched to pupils' abilities. The most able pupils and the most able disadvantaged pupils deepen their understanding and master new concepts by completing demanding tasks. This year, you have introduced additional personalised sessions for disadvantaged pupils to support their learning further. Leaders have prioritised building pupils' mathematical vocabulary so that they can discuss their reasoning and explain their thinking clearly. The most able pupils, and the most able disadvantaged pupils, develop their skills further as part of the school's newspaper team. They take responsibility for working out the production costs and selling the paper.
- Reading is promoted strongly throughout the school. Workshops for parents help them to support their children's learning at home. At the end of the Reception Year, more children reach above-average standards in reading compared with national averages. Improvements to the curriculum for phonics have successfully increased the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check. In 2016, considerably more pupils reached the standard compared to the national average.
- The most able pupils are enthusiastic and accomplished readers. Pupils in Year 6 were very clear about the sorts of books they enjoyed reading, and why. The most able readers in key stage 2 support the younger ones by hearing them read. Provisional results in national assessments in reading at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 also suggest that more pupils reached the higher standards compared with pupils nationally. The least able readers are supported effectively to develop enjoyment of books and build early reading skills.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- inaccuracies in pupils' spelling are identified and addressed to improve pupils' writing further.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Southwark and the director of children's services for Southwark. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Madeleine Gerard
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I agreed to prioritise the following areas with the school at the start of the inspection:

- Are leaders' actions effectively improving pupils' outcomes in writing across the school?
- Are leaders' actions successfully improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in mathematics?

I carried out the following activities to explore these areas during the inspection:

- meetings with you and with the assistant headteachers
- a meeting with two members of the middle leadership team who have responsibility for literacy and mathematics
- a discussion with two governors
- a meeting with a representative of the local authority
- visits to classes in the early years provision, key stage 1 and key stage 2 to observe teaching and look at pupils' work
- observation of a key stage 2 assembly at the start of the day
- informal conversations with pupils
- evaluation of recent information about pupils' academic outcomes and a range of documentation provided by the school including the school's self-evaluation and development plans
- listening to pupils read in key stages 1 and 2
- evaluation of records about keeping pupils safe and about attendance
- informal discussions with parents in the playground at the beginning of the day and consideration of the views of 138 parents from Parent View, the online Ofsted survey tool.