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Mr Michael Lobo  
St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Weymouth  
Hardy Avenue  
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Dorset  
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Dear Mr Lobo

### **Short inspection of St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Weymouth**

Following my visit to the school on 31 January 2017, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in June 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You have created a team of staff who are keen to improve the school and maximise the potential of all pupils. The training and trust invested in middle leaders is enabling them to be proficient leaders in their particular areas of responsibility. Precise evaluation by you and your team means that priorities for school improvement are clear to all involved. Your actions are having a positive impact on the quality of teaching, pupils' progress and the curriculum.

The specific needs of pupils are catered for effectively by teachers and teaching assistants. Detailed and informed individual plans for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are reviewed regularly by leaders and governors. You, your team and governors carefully consider how the funding received for these pupils is used so they can access their learning effectively and progress well. In addition, you ensure pupils' well-being so that all can enjoy learning and take part in the full range of activities provided at school.

Teachers use a range of strategies to support pupils in their academic and personal development. Clear routines and guidance when they take on new initiatives provide pupils with a secure structure to gain new knowledge, skill or understanding. For any pupil who misunderstands or takes a while longer to grasp a new concept, immediate intervention is put in place to support them well in their understanding. Pupils speak of their appreciation and their successes when following these systems and are making good progress at school.

You are very aware that the attendance of some pupils has been too low for some time and are working hard to resolve the issue. Parents are fully informed as to the implications of taking pupils out of school during term time. Close working with other schools and the adoption of a range of initiatives used elsewhere are improving pupils' attendance overall. It is now in line with the national average. Effective links with your social worker mean that individual cases of poor attendance are better understood by all involved. This approach has led some pupils, particularly the disadvantaged, to be attending school full time when previously their attendance used to be significantly below the national average.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and the new safeguarding governor have created a culture where any risks identified to pupils and staff are acted upon immediately and minimised, for example in matters relating to the security of the school site. Your determined actions in addressing safeguarding, safety and security issues reflect your deep commitment to this aspect of the school's work. The safeguarding policy is up to date and very comprehensive, ensuring that all are clear about the procedures to follow if a concern is raised. Parents are fully informed about the school's procedures through the publication of the most recent national guidelines for safeguarding on the website. Staff are suitably trained in the most recent changes to safeguarding procedures, meaning that they can discharge their duties with confidence. Leaders are unyielding yet sensitive in their work with pupils, parents and external agencies to ensure that the support for the most vulnerable pupils is appropriate. Importantly, pupils feel safe and secure in school; most parents agree. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and child protection records are detailed and of high quality.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders hold a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. All are playing their part in driving improvement. The new chair and vice-chair of the governing body are deeply involved in monitoring the school. The restructuring of governor responsibilities is empowering governors to be more challenging on aspects of school performance. For example, they are questioning the mathematical performance of pupils in Years 4 and 5 and the outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Governors use their collective skills to support and challenge you effectively. As a result, pupils' progress is improving further.
- An area that needed to be investigated was the quality of leadership of mathematics. Following the Year 6 results in 2016, a full review of pupils' performance, the quality of teaching and the curriculum for mathematics was undertaken. The findings have been used to identify the areas for improvement required and are contained in your school improvement plan, not just for Year 6 but across the school.
- The new leader of mathematics is an enthusiastic and gifted mathematician. Their actions are engaging teachers and pupils in mathematics and have created a renewed and distinctive cultural shift in attitude toward the subject in a short space of time. Investment in resources to support pupils' progress in the areas of

problem-solving and reasoning are helping to develop the skills they need in these areas effectively. Equally, your new approach to teaching calculation, so that pupils understand the relationship between numbers better, is proving successful. Effective strategies are in place to check pupils' gains in mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. You are aware that the start is going well and are keen to improve on it continually.

- In 2016, too few of the most able pupils performed as well as they should have in the grammar and spelling tests. Although this was a relatively small number of pupils, you and your leaders know that this area can be improved further. The majority of pupils are of middle and high ability and you are making sure that they progress well in these areas by raising teachers' expectations of what the most able are capable of achieving.
- A range of approaches are supporting your work in this area well. Spelling and grammar activities are being matched to the right level for pupils' abilities and ages and, therefore, meeting their needs well. Parents are informed of your expectations for pupils so that support can be given at home that helps pupils to make more rapid progress. Teaching assistants make immediate checks on the learning of pupils by examining their class work and providing follow-up activities so that no pupil is left behind. Pupils appreciate the school's efforts and are ready for the next stage of their learning.
- Pupils write extensively on a range of topics and produce work that is well presented. The pupils are developing their use of grammatical structures and applying them effectively in most cases. Their overlap between the grammatical exercises undertaken and the application of them in writing for different purposes is not yet planned effectively. This is an area for further development for the school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers improve pupils' writing so more achieve the higher standard at greater depth by:
  - checking pupils' gains in spelling, grammar and punctuation skills, knowledge and understanding more precisely
  - ensuring that activities planned develop pupils' ability to write accurately across a range of subjects and genres
  - expecting pupils to use the grammatical and technical aspects of writing learned when writing for different purposes
- the monitoring of pupils' progress in mathematics continues while evaluating the new curriculum and its impact on improvements.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, subject leaders, governors, staff, the area adviser for the trust and pupils. I visited lessons for all classes in the school. I looked at the quality of the work in pupils' exercise books. I considered documentary evidence relating to the impact of the school's work, including safeguarding. I took into account 47 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and 23 comments written by parent plus the nine responses from staff to the Ofsted online survey.