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Mrs Joanne Davies  
Headteacher  
Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Primary School  
Rudgwick Drive  
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Lancashire  
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Dear Mrs Davies

### **Short inspection of Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Primary School, Bury**

Following my visit to the school on 14 February 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 the school was judged to be good in June 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There have been many staff changes since then, including your appointment as substantive headteacher in March 2015. The assistant headteachers are also new to their posts. Nonetheless, leaders have swiftly developed a well-informed knowledge of the needs of the school and your clear vision has put the school at the heart of the community. You have engaged well with parents by not only increasing communication between home and school, but also establishing an open and warm culture where parents are always welcome. As a result, parents speak very highly of the school and of your leadership.

Governors fully support you in your role and together you all have a clear understanding of what the school does well and where even more can be achieved. This has ensured that your priorities for improvement are accurately identified and your plans focus on areas most needing improvement.

Pupils told me that they thoroughly enjoy coming to school because they feel it is a warm, happy and exciting place to be. Pupils enjoy lessons and say that teachers really help and support them in their learning. The atmosphere across the school, both in lessons and on the playground, is calm. Pupils are well behaved, listen attentively and have good manners. Pupils and parents agree that pupils' behaviour is a strength of the school.

Teaching continues to be good. The impact of this effective teaching is most evident in the early years and key stage 1, where progress is faster. The work in pupils' books and the school's own tracking data show that progress is now accelerating in key stage 2. As a result, an increasing proportion of pupils in key stage 2 are on track to reach and exceed the standards expected for their age.

We discussed the current strengths of the school and the areas you are working to improve. Your development plan rightly focuses on continuing to improve standards in reading and the quality of teaching for the most able pupils. You recognise that there is further work to be done to ensure that more of the most able pupils gain a greater depth in their knowledge in writing and mathematics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Staff are vigilant, observant and caring in their safeguarding role. Pupil welfare and safety are paramount. You regularly meet with your parent support adviser to discuss pupils' needs, and this is typical of the school's dedication and proactive approach to understanding the needs of pupils and keeping them safe. Procedures for safeguarding are robust and are known by all staff because of regular briefings and updates. Recruitment checks completed on staff are thorough. Records and logs for safeguarding are detailed and are kept securely. For example, records viewed during the inspection show that, where pupils are potentially vulnerable, leaders act swiftly to protect them from harm and involve external agencies when needed.

Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe in a broad range of situations, including when they work online. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about how, as e-cadets, they recently led a whole-school assembly to ensure that other pupils understand how and why they need to keep themselves safe online. Pupils told me that staff are caring and approachable, which makes them feel extremely safe as they know they can ask for support and help when they are worried about a problem. Pupils speak warmly about the 'family feel' across the school where everybody looks after each other. They were so proud to share with me that the 'Gift Team' not only lead collective worship, but also lead the weekly 'worry club', helping other pupils find solutions to their problems.

### **Inspection findings**

- The key strengths of behaviour, the quality of teaching and learning and the progress that pupils make, which were identified at the last inspection, have been maintained. The previous inspection reported that the school needed to develop structured, consistent systems to teach reading and writing skills and to ensure consistency in the way that pupils receive feedback to guide and improve their work. Teaching of reading and writing is effective, as can be seen in the improvements in your most recent key stage 2 results. These showed that the school had a greater proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics than nationally. An in-depth scrutiny of pupils'

work that I undertook showed that standards of presentation are high, particularly in key stage 2. Pupils understand what they should be aiming to achieve in all their work.

- Leaders have taken a range of steps to improve reading, writing and mathematics teaching so that the most able pupils achieve higher standards. The scrutiny of pupils' work showed that pupils are challenged in both English and mathematics as a result of teachers planning tasks that deepen pupils' understanding. Your own tracking information shows that an increasing number of pupils across different year groups are beginning to reach higher standards in English and mathematics. Leaders were able to show how staff training in this area is being shared across the school and is impacting positively on teachers' practice.
- Subject leaders are taking action to improve the quality of teaching and outcomes in their areas of responsibility. However, they were not wholly clear as to the impact that their actions were having or whether this was consistent across the school. We agreed that, although there are some good examples of this work, it remains an aspect that should improve further.
- Leaders have taken effective action to improve phonics teaching, which is a strength of the school, despite a recent dip in published results. Leaders have a strong understanding of the strengths of teaching within this area and make effective use of online training to further improve staff's skills. Consequently, most pupils learn new letters and sounds rapidly to secure a good start in learning to read. Pupils who may initially struggle with early reading are targeted effectively through individual interventions and, as a result, catch up with their peers.
- You have put in place clear and robust systems for monitoring and tracking pupils who are persistently absent. You work skilfully with the school's parent support adviser to ensure you both fully understand the barriers that stop pupils from attending school regularly. Persistent absence figures have reduced this academic year because of clear action planning and the support provided by you and the parent support adviser. We discussed case studies at length and saw the impact of your work, which reflects how the nurturing support that the school offers 'goes that extra mile'.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils have increased opportunities to broaden and deepen their knowledge and understanding in writing and mathematics
- they precisely evaluate the impact on pupils' achievement of actions included in the school's improvement plans.

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

Yours sincerely

James Blackwell  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this short inspection, I met with you, senior leaders, five members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. We conducted a series of short visits to lessons and I visited other classes and had the opportunity to speak to pupils and see their work. I also listened to a number of pupils read. As part of the inspection, I met with groups of pupils throughout the day, spoke with five parents at the school gates and took account of free text comments from Parent View and three letters from parents given to me during the inspection. I scrutinised your assessment information, school improvement planning, attendance data, risk assessments, the single central record and other safeguarding procedures and practices.