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Judith Metcalfe
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Metcalfe

Short inspection of St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Osbaldeston

Following my visit on 8 March 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 January 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education since the last inspection. The quality of provision for the youngest children has improved. The school was asked to increase pupils' achievement in writing after the inspection. The work of pupils currently in the school indicates that there are more opportunities for pupils to write in subjects other than English, for example in history, geography, religious education and science. Pupils' progress in each key stage is good and their standard of writing has improved and they know how to improve their work. One of the next steps for the school is to extend pupils' mathematics skills across other subjects, particularly science and geography. Sometimes pupils move on too quickly to new topics, particularly in Years 1 to 4, before fully understanding the mathematics on which they are working.

You, the staff and the governing body have shaped the culture of the school and frequently revisit its mission and values. St Mary's is an inclusive school at the heart of the local community. It is outward-looking and, in order to keep improving, staff and governors are always looking to learn from specialists and other schools, including the other school in the collaboration. Pupils are happy and feel challenged by the work set. They are inspired by the curriculum and the theme weeks and visitors that you provide for them, such as the Brazilian drumming and a visit by pupils from Tanzania. The next step for the school is to extend the diversity the pupils learn about so that it covers the range found in modern Britain. Teachers

need to make sure that pupils do not have any stereotypical or generalised views about countries or people. A next step is also for the governing body to check the content of the website and school policies to make sure that they fully meet the government's requirements.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding pupils is a high priority. The site is secure and there is a good system to make sure that visitors are unable to access the school freely and that adults working with pupils are correctly checked. You and the staff have frequently updated your training to make sure that you are completely abreast of local and national developments. You have a good system to update staff throughout the week and term to make sure that safeguarding and health and safety are at the forefront of staff's minds. You and the staff work well with other agencies such as the police, health services and the local authority. You make sure that you share information which may help to protect children and maintain detailed and thorough documentation.

Inspection findings

- For this inspection I focused on four main areas. Initially I tried to find out why the published information about pupils' attendance suggested that boys and the disadvantaged pupils have very low attendance compared to all pupils nationally. It was clear that the school's information about pupils' absence between 2015 and 2016 did not match the published information. The main reason for this anomaly was an error in the submission of the information to the Department for Education. Since the start of September 2017 the attendance of all pupils, including boys and pupils who are disadvantaged, has been good. You and the governing body track all pupils' absence termly and that of individual pupils more frequently. However, at present you do not track groups of pupils frequently enough to identify whether you need to take quick action to improve their attendance.
- My second focus was the progress made by the most able mathematicians, because in 2016 this group of pupils made well below average progress compared with similar pupils nationally. Some of the slow progress for this group was because of past changes to, and weaknesses in, teaching, which was tackled effectively by you and the governing body. Currently the most able pupils make good progress in mathematics, particularly in Years 5 and 6. They gain confidence in their use of number, use inverses to check on the accuracy of their calculations and demonstrate quick recall of number facts. Expectations have risen with the new national curriculum and your staff are making sure that the work is challenging enough for all pupils to achieve their best. Pupils could, however, make better progress if they spent more time on a mathematical idea before moving on to new ones. For example, all pupils spend time calculating the perimeter of squares, then rectangles and then move on to polygons. However, they did not explore perimeter of squares in full depth by reasoning, solving problems and exploring perimeter in all of its forms before moving on to rectangles. In science work and other subjects there is not much evidence of

mathematics, such as, for example, interpreting complex data, graphs and charts in geography or science.

- My third focus for this visit was how well the school teaches diversity and includes all pupils equally. This was because there is no published equality policy on the website and there were some groups missing from policies and procedures, such as people who are transgender or those who are, or may become, lesbian, bisexual or gay. However, it is very clear that all pupils are treated equally and fairly. You and the staff ensure that there is good provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and you make sure that they are fully included in the school's activities. There are many chances for pupils to learn about other religions and beliefs and also about different countries and peoples through history, geography and assemblies. The school should now teach about the full range of diversity identified in the 2010 Equality Act, such as people who are transgender and those who are or may become lesbian, gay or bisexual. The overwhelming majority of people studied in the curriculum in art, science and history are men. There is sometimes a lack of diversity across these subjects.
- The governing body at the start of the inspection had not made sure that all of the information that should be published was on the website. The information, however, was in school. The website is frozen at the moment because of an external hack, which means that there will be a delay before the required information is posted. There is an unpublished new equality policy which is still being worked on before being ratified by the governing body.
- My fourth focus was linked to the quality of writing, an area for improvement at the last inspection. Pupils respond well to feedback from adults and to the greater emphasis on grammar and punctuation. Pupils become increasingly knowledgeable about the different word classifications and groups such as adverbs, relative clauses and frontal adverbials. There are many examples of pupils' reading and writing in different subjects such as comprehensions in history and geography.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in mathematics, teachers spend more time deepening and extending pupils' knowledge of, and reasoning about, mathematical ideas to make sure that they fully understand before moving on to new topics
- pupils extend and apply their mathematical understanding in other subjects, particularly science and geography
- through the curriculum, teachers challenge pupils' stereotypes and teach them about the full range of diversity that is found in modern Britain
- they carefully check that the information on the website fully meets the requirements published by the Department for Education. They should also check regularly the attendance of groups of pupils.

I am copying this letter to the 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 Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

With you, I conducted an observation of teaching in each class. I looked through a sample of pupils' work from each year group. I took into account the views of 21 pupils who completed the pupils' survey and of a group of eight pupils.

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

I took into account the views of 27 parents who completed Ofsted's online survey and four members of staff who completed the staff survey.