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30 June 2017

Miss Charlotte Hartley  
St Anne's Church of England Primary School, Edgeside  
Ashworth Road  
Waterfoot  
Rossendale  
Lancashire  
BB4 9JE

Dear Miss Hartley

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Anne's Church of England Primary School, Edgeside**

Following my visit to your school on 16 June 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in May 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- embed recent improvements in mathematics teaching so that pupils receive greater challenge and have more opportunity to deepen their learning through problem-solving
- ensure that teaching and the curriculum on offer in key stage 1 enables these pupils to make the most of their strong start in the early years
- help the disadvantaged pupils to make swifter progress by reducing the number of disadvantaged pupils who do not attend school regularly enough.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the two assistant headteachers to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also met with

six members of the governing body and two representatives from the local authority. You and I visited every classroom to observe pupils at work and to look at their books. I evaluated your improvement plan and considered other evidence, including the 2016 validated outcomes for pupils, achievement information for pupils currently at the school and your checks on teaching. I chatted to a group of six older pupils and eight parents to gain their views of the school.

## **Context**

There has been considerable change at the school since the inspection in May 2016. Due to extended leave, three classes have been taught by temporary teachers. One teacher has left the school. Three new governors have joined the governing body.

## **Main findings**

St Anne's was already on an improvement journey when the inspectors visited the school in May 2016. Although you, the governors and the staff were disappointed at the outcome of this inspection, no one lost heart or wasted time lamenting what might have been. In hindsight you all agree that the judgement was correct. The previous inspection provided a springboard, enabling everyone to tackle shortcomings at the school with renewed vigour and pace. Consequently, much has been achieved in the past year. The foundations for future success are firmly in place.

Despite fluctuations in staffing, caused by long-term extended leave and a resignation, you have successfully harnessed the enthusiasm and dedication of your team. Everyone is on board. All share a desire to make sure pupils gain the best possible start to their education. Change has been managed sensitively, so that staff are buoyant and keen to show what they can do. Furthermore, your sharper focus on pupils' academic gains has not detracted you or the staff from maintaining the many strengths cited in the previous report. You continue to provide a lively, broad and balanced curriculum. This contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of school, their good behaviour and their strong personal skills. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development shines out. The moving prayers pupils produced following the recent tragic events in Manchester are testament to their empathy for others.

You have a clear understanding of what needs to happen next to ensure a positive outcome at the next inspection. Comprehensive, clear and detailed school improvement planning underpins all that you do. It is a good vehicle for setting future actions and ensuring that everyone understands their role in the journey to becoming a good school.

You have tightened your checks on teaching. A range of activities such as visiting classrooms, reviewing pupils' work and checking information on pupils' progress inform your views on teaching and learning. Consequently, you have an accurate insight into the teaching that pupils experience on a daily basis. You are ably supported in this work by your assistant headteachers, who have grown in

confidence and expertise since the previous inspection. Staff trust your judgements and those of your leaders. Teachers respond well to the regular checks on teaching and act swiftly upon the short- and long-term goals they receive to improve their practice. This strategy, complemented by the good-quality training you provide, is leading to stronger teaching across the school.

In May 2016, inspectors commented that whole-school policies were not followed by all staff. This shortcoming is now a relic of the past. You have renewed whole-school approaches to teaching and established clear guidelines of what you expect to see in pupils' books. Staff are following your lead well. Pupils' books show the consistent application of agreed policies. Teachers' expectations have risen, which has led to a marked improvement in the quality and quantity of work that pupils produce. Pupils' work is presented well. They take care to do their best and are proud of their achievements. Their handwriting is much better due to focused teaching of this key skill.

Governors have been re-energised by the external review of governance. They talk about a 'rebirth' which has led to a root and branch change for governance at the school. Governance structures, membership and roles have all been overhauled to ensure that governors are well placed to deliver their responsibilities. There is a renewed sense of purpose, energy and enthusiasm. This is helping governors to make a greater contribution to the growing leadership capacity at St Anne's. Governors have taken the lead in developing a strategic vision for the school which extends beyond the next inspection date. While they are confident that the school will be good at the next inspection, they see this as a marker along the way in their drive to become 'awesome'.

Pupils are positive about the changes you have made. They talk with enthusiasm about the challenges that they are offered in class and they enjoy working harder than before. Most of the parents I spoke to echo pupils' views. They agree that the school is improving for the better.

The 2016 published results present a mixed picture. There is cause for celebration in some areas. The early years, a strength at the last inspection, continues to flourish. Well-planned provision and purposeful teaching means that children gain a good grounding to their education. Consequently, the number of children who achieved a good level of development increased again in 2016. It was above the national average.

Far more Year 2 pupils reached the expected standard for their age in 2016 than has been the case previously. In particular, the most able pupils did very well, gaining greater depth in their learning. This is a sure sign of improvement since the last inspection. However, there is more to do in key stage 1 to help pupils make the most of their strong starting points into Year 1. Teachers have not quite adapted the curriculum to reflect what pupils know and can do. Too much scaffolding holds pupils back from soaring.

The achievement of Year 6 pupils in 2016 was weak overall and meant that the school met the Department for Education's coasting definition. Despite a marked improvement in pupils' writing achievement, they were let down by slow progress in mathematics. This cohort, and the current Year 6, have borne the brunt of weak teaching and staff turbulence in the past. Although they are making much better progress now due to stronger teaching, they are living with a legacy of underachievement. It is evident from looking in their books that a number of the current Year 6 still have a mountain to climb to reach the expected standards for their age.

Elsewhere, school data and pupils' books show the impact of more-effective teaching. Consequently, pupils' progress is improving and standards are rising. Writing, a weakness in the past, is much better. Pupils are gaining a writer's voice, producing quality pieces of work for different purposes and audiences. Training has helped teachers to improve their subject knowledge for teaching mathematics. Pupils' books show appropriate coverage of the national curriculum requirements. However, only a few teachers have got to grips with the school's new way of teaching mathematics mastery. Not enough pupils have the opportunity to deepen their learning through challenging work and problem-solving.

Disadvantaged pupils have not fared well academically in the past. Their progress is improving due to the changes you have made following a review of the pupil premium funding. Nonetheless, this group of pupils are not catching up quite as quickly as their non-disadvantaged peers. This is related to their weaker attendance rates. Almost all of the pupils who miss a large amount of time away from school are disadvantaged.

### **External support**

External support has been extensive and effective in raising the quality of teaching and developing key leadership roles. Frequent visits by local authority officers and access to specialist advisers have all borne fruit. The local authority has stood shoulder to shoulder with you and your team to reverse the fortunes at St Anne's.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanne Olsson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**