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Mrs Rachel Ballard
Headteacher
St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, Fulwood, Preston
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Dear Mrs Ballard

Short inspection of St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, Fulwood, Preston

Following my visit to the school on 15 June 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

You and your team have created a vibrant and engaging school community. Pupils benefit from a very high-quality curriculum. Alongside the core subjects, pupils can be found writing to their pen-friends in Germany, playing cricket, making butter pie, playing the trumpet, imagining themselves inside a Lowry painting or pondering big questions such as, 'What do I want to do with my life?'

The vast majority of parents are effusive in their praise for the school. One parent commented: 'I would strongly recommend this school to other parents. My little boy is very happy there and enjoys going to school.'

Pupils behave well and are typically polite and welcoming, particularly to visitors. Attendance is securely above the national average. Pupils speak very highly of the school's pastoral mentor. She leads a range of therapeutic work for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Much of her work improves pupils' confidence and self-esteem and ultimately improves their progress.

There are procedures in place to deal with bullying. Incidents are recorded centrally so that you can monitor them. However, a few parents and pupils reported concerns that bullying is not always dealt with effectively.

Pupils achieve well across a range of subjects. Scrutiny of books shows that the most able pupils are better challenged across a range of subjects, including English, religious education and science, and in topic work.

Progress in mathematics dipped unexpectedly last year and was significantly below the national average. Results are set to improve again this year. Scrutiny of work in mathematics across all year groups and conversations with pupils show that the curriculum does not consistently offer sufficient challenge, particularly for the most able. In a Year 3 and 4 class, books showed that mathematics was well taught, with a more engaging curriculum. However, there is inconsistency across and between year groups.

The local authority has provided good support to the school since the previous inspection. Writing was an area for improvement. Standards of writing have improved greatly. Scrutiny of books across the curriculum shows a lot of extended writing with high technical accuracy, good standards of spelling and very well-developed handwriting.

You and members of the governing body have tackled weaknesses in teaching. You continue to address these effectively. Leadership has been strengthened. You have recently appointed a highly skilled and visionary deputy headteacher who is a specialist leader in education for mathematics. He has a clear plan to accelerate progress in this subject.

Safeguarding is effective.

The single central record meets requirements. All staff have regular child protection training, including welfare staff. Case studies show the impact of your training for non-teaching staff. This has led to them reporting concerns appropriately. Child protection records are kept securely. You keep appropriate records of child protection concerns as well as open cases, and work effectively with relevant agencies. Your work is very detailed and thorough. All welfare requirements are met in the Reception class.

Inspection findings

- The most able pupils are making better progress across a range of subjects, including writing. In Reception, we observed some of the most able children constructing a sentence with a high standard of handwriting. The outdoor area is full of opportunities to write; children are actively encouraged to do so.
- I also observed the teaching of writing in the Year 3 and 4 class alongside your deputy headteacher. Pupils were keen to show us their biographies of Usain Bolt and Muhammad Ali. They were written fluently with a high degree of technical accuracy. Pupils referred to the helpful displays of spelling, grammar and punctuation to enhance their writing.
- I observed the teaching of religious education. The most able pupils were very well challenged by the curriculum as they were asked to ponder and reflect upon thought-provoking, open-ended questions at a high level. Their written work

illustrated a curriculum steeped in extended writing with the same high standards that would be expected in English.

- Scrutiny of Year 5 and 6 books of the most able pupils paints a similar picture. There is strong evidence of challenging reading across the curriculum. Pupils had written a piece about 'The Highwayman'. Work was painstakingly drafted and redrafted to good effect, reflecting a whole-school focus on high-quality writing.
- Results in mathematics in key stage 2 dipped unexpectedly last year. Current tracking shows that results have improved and pupils are making better progress again. Scrutiny of books shows that there remains variability in standards. In some classes, very clear assessment leads to better progress, but practice is inconsistent. For some pupils, particularly the most able pupils, there is not enough stretch and challenge in the curriculum, which prevents them from doing better than the expected standard.
- Members of the governing body have ensured that areas for improvement from the previous inspection have remained school priorities. Positive improvements in teaching and writing are clear. You and the governing body have capitalised on the close partnership with the local high school in order to broaden your curriculum. This has brought about a significant improvement in the quality of teaching in subjects such as music, technology and modern foreign languages.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue to improve achievement in mathematics, particularly for the most able pupils
- enhance procedures for dealing with the few instances of bullying.

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

Yours sincerely

Sally Kenyon
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and your leadership team. I also met with members of the governing body. I spoke with a range of pupils in lessons and at social times. I scrutinised a range of workbooks across a variety of subjects and year groups. I looked at the school's website and analysed the school self-evaluation and school improvement plan. I analysed the school's record of checks made on the suitability of staff, records of child protection and staff training. I also discussed other aspects of

safeguarding with you. I spoke with parents in the playground at the beginning of the school day and considered 107 freetext responses and 33 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.