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Mrs Christine Lynch  
Headteacher  
St Anne's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School  
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Tyne and Wear  
SR4 9AA

Dear Mrs Lynch

### **Short inspection of St Anne's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 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 developed a stimulating environment for learning in which pupils grow in confidence, work hard and aim high.

You and the deputy headteacher have ensured that spiritual, moral, social and cultural education permeates all of the school's work. Pupils, even the very youngest through learning based around Elmer by David McKee, understand that every person is unique and that individual differences are to be valued and celebrated.

The value you place on every pupil is shown through the bespoke provision that is put in place for those needing a little extra help. Pupils value this individualised support highly. For example, a pupil told me that nurturing sessions have improved his ability to communicate. Parents are very appreciative of the school's work too. A parent reported that having their very young child attend school enthusiastically has been 'both reassuring and comforting'.

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to improve the quality of teaching and raise the standards pupils reach in subjects other than English. You have

addressed both priorities successfully. For example, mathematics, which was a weaker subject area previously, is thriving in school now. Teachers provide open-ended tasks that allow pupils to investigate, reason and solve mathematical problems. Pupils enjoy and benefit from taking part in mathematical 'Finding out Fridays'. As a result, the proportion of pupils who reach and exceed the expected standard for their age in mathematics at the end of each key stage is growing year-on-year.

You understand the need for disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for support through the government's additional funding, to attend school every day. This is an area for further development because their levels of attendance are below those seen nationally.

Quite rightly, you have implemented a new approach to recording trends in behavioural incidents to the governing body. This is giving governors the information they require to support and challenge you to improve aspects of personal development, behaviour and welfare. You appreciate the need to tighten some of the school's systems and procedures further, including the administration of the school's website.

You acknowledge that senior leaders find it difficult to judge the progress that children make from their individual starting points in the early years with pinpoint accuracy. In addition, following leaders' success in improving the standard of mathematics throughout the school, you know that standards in reading are not as high as they could be.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding and care in your school.

Pupils trust their teachers and senior leaders implicitly. They feel safe and secure in school. Pupils recognise and can explain different types of bullying. They are confident that adults in school would take immediate action if bullying occurred at St Anne's. Your pupils were very proud to tell me about winning the 'most active anti-bullying team in the City of Sunderland' award recently. Pupils understand the rules for staying safe online. They told me that they would never give their personal details out online and that they know how to report the inappropriate online behaviour of others.

Risk assessments and staff recruitment checks are rigorous. Staff are trained well in all aspects of child protection and safeguarding. You, as designated leader for child protection, ensure that pupils access the support to which they are entitled. You are not afraid to escalate safeguarding referrals to the next level if you are disappointed with the response from children's services. The children are at the heart of the school's work.

## **Inspection findings**

- Through effective senior and subject leadership, the standards that pupils reach and the progress they make in mathematics have improved greatly since the previous inspection. Teachers plan exciting, 'real life' activities in mathematics which require pupils to think deeply and apply their mathematical knowledge to reason and solve problems. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, reach higher standards in mathematics than they do in English, particularly in reading, by the end of Year 6. Interestingly, during the inspection, a small sample of pupils identified teaching to be stronger in mathematics and writing than in reading.
- You remodelled the senior leadership team successfully. You lead a more distributed leadership team now. Phase leaders are increasingly accountable for the standards reached in their key stages. You have identified the need for leaders to measure the progress made by children in the early years with even more precision. This will enable leaders to judge accurately which areas of the provision require further strengthening.
- Some administrative systems, such as those to ensure that the school's website is compliant with the Department for Education's requirements, need strengthening. For example, the school's behaviour policy, although agreed and ratified by governors recently, was two years out of date on the school's website at the beginning of the inspection.
- Governance is growing in strength. Governors understand their strategic role. They ask challenging questions in committee and full governing body meetings. Governors underpin their strategic decisions with knowledge gathered during their link monitoring visits to school. Their ability to challenge and support personal development, behaviour and well-being in the school has been enhanced through the provision of statistics about the number of behavioural incidents that occur. Governors understand the need to evaluate school improvement against specific targets at points during the academic year.
- Senior and phase leaders check on the work of the school regularly. You understand the strengths and areas for development in terms of teaching, learning and assessment well. Your evaluation of the lessons we observed together was accurate and insightful. Teachers deploy teaching assistants effectively. Teaching assistants attend internal and external training. They use their knowledge and skills to deliver short, sharp and bespoke interventions for individual pupils and small groups of pupils.
- The small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in school. The coordinator for special educational needs (SENCo) helps staff to write individual education plans for pupils that are matched closely to their individual needs. She ensures that staff attend appropriate training so they have the skills to deliver high-quality intervention activities.
- The children in the early years are engaged in their learning totally. Staff, both teachers and teaching assistants, lead the learning of small groups of pupils purposefully. During the inspection, the Reception children were captivated by a

report of a missing pirate. They produced huge posters individually that contained a well-written description of the missing pirate. In response to a ransom letter, they searched the early years environment looking for clues. Their excitement was palpable. The children's behaviour was exemplary.

- An increasing number of children are entering the early years with speech, language and communication difficulties. Teachers and teaching assistants identify issues quickly. Leaders make referrals for therapy rapidly. Unfortunately, some of these children do not access support in a timely manner because their parents fail to take them to speech and language therapy appointments. However, leaders are persistent and re-refer until each child's needs are met.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more disadvantaged pupils attend school every day
- a greater proportion of pupils reach and exceed the standards expected for their age in reading at the end of each key stage
- sound systems and procedures are put in place to measure the progress children make in the early years and ensure that the contents of the school's website meet the Department for Education's requirements.

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

Yours sincerely

Belita Scott  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I discussed the work of the school with you and the deputy headteacher, the leader of the early years, the SENCo and two governors, including the chair of the governing body. I checked a range of documentation including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the school's improvement plan. I examined information about pupils' achievement together with external evaluations of aspects of the school's work and minutes of meetings of the governing body. I considered 15 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, together with 17 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. Alongside senior leaders, I visited three classes to observe teaching, learning and assessment. I checked the progress made

by pupils in their workbooks, talked formally to a group of six pupils and talked more informally to pupils in lessons and at breaktime about their learning. I also listened to pupils from Years 3 and 6 read.