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Mr John Robertshaw
Headteacher
Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School
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Dear Mr Robertshaw

Short inspection of Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School, Colne

Following my visit to the school on 26 September 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 December 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Through your strong, compassionate leadership you have established a forward-thinking senior leadership team and an enthusiastic staff full of energy and drive. As a result, there is an ambitious culture in which pupils do well, both academically and in their personal development. You have worked effectively to improve teaching and learning and have implemented a new coaching programme. This effective programme has resulted in stronger teaching and an improvement in assessing pupils' learning to inform next steps.

Those parents who spoke with me at the start of the day were extremely positive about the school. Many of the parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, spoke of how happy their children are at Sacred Heart and were full of praise for the school's family ethos. One comment summed up these positive views: 'We can't help but be bowled over by the wonderful atmosphere and ethos. The head and teachers are always and easily accessible and responsive.' All pupils who spoke to me were extremely positive about their school. They talked about their learning with enthusiasm. They spoke highly of their teachers, whose support they truly value. Pupils really appreciate the way their teachers try to make their learning fun and engaging.

You, your staff and the governing body recognise the vital role the curriculum plays in enabling pupils to achieve well. Aside from the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics, there are many opportunities for pupils to engage in cross-curricular projects. These have included the themed history weeks which have enthused staff, pupils

and parents. Pupils in Year 6 described to me how much they enjoyed sailing a Viking longboat on the local reservoir.

Leaders, including the governing body, have also taken effective action since the last inspection to address the areas for improvement. You have worked hard to improve fluency, reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics by giving pupils more opportunities to practise these skills across the curriculum. This has resulted in better outcomes for pupils in mathematics. However, some teaching does not develop pupils' understanding of how to improve their own learning and this sometimes slows progress in some subjects.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have recently introduced a new, effective system of safeguarding which is well understood by staff. Staff know what actions to take if they have any concerns about pupils' safety or well-being and have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. You provide quality support to vulnerable pupils and their families, demonstrating the caring ethos at the heart of the school. I spoke with a group of year 6 pupils and it was clear from our conversation that you and your staff have created a learning environment where they feel safe. Pupils are confident that adults look after them well. You ensure that pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and social media.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on a number of areas. The first was the action taken by leaders to improve outcomes for pupils in reading across the school. In 2016, pupils' progress in reading at the end of key stage 2 was below the national average. You identified the reasons why, and changes to the organisation and delivery of the reading teaching sessions have brought about sustained improvements. You have raised the profile of reading through improving the library, increasing the range of reading material and introducing reading sessions at lunchtime. There are also several well-attended library clubs during the week, allowing time after school for parents and pupils to choose books together. There has been a whole-school focus on fluency and responding to text. Your assessment system has allowed guided reading to be monitored for effectiveness, resulting in a new approach to reading. Teachers model questions and answers well in guided reading sessions, improving reading comprehension. As a result, reading progress is improving across the school for current pupils. Your English leader has a very good understanding of priorities and the improvements needed to further improve outcomes in reading.
- The second area of focus was to consider your actions to accelerate disadvantaged pupils' progress. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at Sacred Heart is small compared with the national average. I was interested to find out how effectively you use the pupil premium funding to help them to achieve their potential. The effective programme of monitoring is helping you to evaluate accurately the needs of this group. You know each of these pupils extremely well and have a clear understanding of the barriers to their learning. Consequently, you are able to support each pupil in a

personalised way. Teaching is now more clearly matched to pupils' needs. Governors are knowledgeable, and are closely involved with the school and effective in their monitoring of school improvement. They evaluate the impact of leaders' actions on disadvantaged pupils' outcomes rigorously. Your most recent information shows that the difference in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally is diminishing in the majority of subjects. Work in pupils' books also confirms this to be the case. Teaching assistants provide very effective support to the disadvantaged pupils they work with across the school. They are proactive in supporting and challenging pupils. They have strong questioning skills which enable pupils to think deeply about their learning. We discussed that, although the difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils is diminishing, there is still more to do.

- The third area we considered was your provision to meet the needs of middle-ability pupils. In 2017, middle-ability pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. You have introduced a coaching strategy that has led to a more consistent approach to teaching and learning. Effective questioning from staff means that current pupils benefit from good-quality teaching which has resulted in improvements in outcomes for middle-ability pupils. More of these pupils than previously move on to achieve greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the year. Your performance information and work in pupils' books show this to be the case. However, further work needs to be done to develop pupils' ownership of their learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- they develop and sustain achievement in reading to the same high standard as in mathematics and writing
- pupils have ownership of how to develop their own learning so they improve their knowledge, understanding and skills in all subjects.

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

Simon Hunter
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Throughout the inspection I spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and school life. I met with you, the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. I looked at learning in pupils' books. I spoke to the school's improvement partner.

I reviewed documentation which included your evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the school development plan. I spoke to four parents at the start of the school day and considered 44 responses to Parent View and 49 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

I visited classes, along with you, to observe pupils' learning. I met with governors to discuss aspects of school leadership and management. I reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.