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Mrs Eileen Gaffney  
Headteacher  
St Anne's RC Primary School  
Clarendon Road  
Audenshaw  
Manchester  
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Dear Mrs Gaffney

### **Short inspection of St Anne's RC Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 3 October 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 October 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The mission to ensure that every pupil achieves their best in work and play is a very evident part of the school's ethos. The high expectations that you set and realise for the quality of teaching are central to this goal and underpin pupils' good achievement, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. Your conviction that school should be a welcoming, safe and happy place to learn is also a very tangible part of the school's culture. These strengths are borne out by parents' overwhelmingly positive comments and responses to the online survey. All parents who completed the survey said that their children were happy at school.

At the last inspection, inspectors asked leaders to raise pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics. They also asked them to improve the consistency with which teachers deepened pupils' learning beyond recollection of facts. Clear improvements in pupils' writing and mathematics are now embedded across the school. The journey to securing these improvements has not been without its challenges. However, your uncompromising drive to improve teaching and learning in these subjects has paid off. Across the school, pupils' progress in writing is particularly strong. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average. Good improvement has also occurred in mathematics. Nationally, pupils are now expected to reach much higher standards than when the school was last inspected. Nevertheless, leaders have been successful in addressing the last inspection's recommendation. By the end of Year 6, attainment in mathematics is similar to national figures, both at the expected and higher standard. All groups of pupils

progress at least as well as might be expected from their different starting points. Improvements in mathematics show that teachers have been successful in deepening pupils' understanding so that their learning goes beyond procedures and facts.

In a number of other subjects, the depth of pupils' learning is not as clear. This is because pupils' achievement is not assessed in all subjects. Assessments of pupils' reading, writing and mathematics are well established. These provide a clear picture of good achievement across the school. Pupils are also assessed in religious education, science, physical education (PE), history and geography. The history work I reviewed lacked depth, however, and was mainly based on knowledge and facts. You explained that the decision to move away from topic books this year is partly related to reducing teacher workload. Pupils now record science work in a separate book, while history and geography work is in their literacy books. The science leader's action plan notes that the change will make checks on pupils' progress and teachers' coverage of science easier. The impact of this change for history and geography has yet to be evaluated, in particular on how effectively and efficiently the subject leader for these subjects can make the same basic checks. A lot of the history work I reviewed gave a higher profile to the development of literacy skills than history skills.

Your deputy headteacher provides you with good support and is developing well in this new role. She is a strong role model for teaching and benefiting from your leadership experience and expertise. You have identified subject leadership as a priority for development this year. Leadership of some subjects is currently shared between staff in different key stages. This has been effective in limiting the impact of staff changes. The system allows more experienced leaders to support new and/or inexperienced colleagues. Governors are good friends to the school and bring a range of experience to their roles. They undertake various training and ask challenging questions about pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Governors are less aware of pupils' achievement across the curriculum and of how the school promotes British values, diversity and equalities. In a recent audit, you acknowledged gaps in the school's provision to deal with some aspects of diversity and equalities. The protected characteristic of sexual orientation was one such gap. The equality objectives that governors and leaders have recently set appropriately state a commitment to increasing pupils' understanding of equality and diversity through the curriculum.

The vast majority of pupils like school and most think behaviour is good. Pupils have learned about different types of bullying and are frank in saying that this sometimes occurs. All who completed the online survey and who spoke to me said that staff are good at sorting out any rare issues that happen. All parents who completed the survey expressed satisfaction with the way the school deals with any bullying.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Rigorous checks determine the suitability of staff to work with children. Child protection training for staff is

regular. A small number of administrative staff have still to complete the online training organised for them. Staff know pupils well and keep a close eye on their welfare. They report any concerns to you or your deputy headteacher, as the designated safeguarding leaders. When working with other professionals, you are insistent that concerns you refer about pupils' safety and welfare receive the attention they deserve. Through the curriculum, pupils are given good information about how to stay safe, including when using the internet.

## **Inspection findings**

- For the last two years, Year 6 pupils' achievement in writing has been better than in reading and in the test for grammar, punctuation and spelling. You explained that pupils' spelling was the element preventing higher standards in this test. Appropriately, spelling is currently a priority for improvement across the school. Pupils' writing confirms their good skills. Teachers' high expectations and creativity in planning tasks that inspire pupils to write are also clearly evident. Year 6 standards and progress in reading improved this year. There is no notable difference between reading and writing at the end of key stage 1. Pupils at key stage 2 say that they love reading. They name different authors and can talk about their styles. Pupils know the skills good readers use, commenting about building stamina by reading more challenging books, and identifying inference.
- You speak convincingly about the school's commitment to providing a broad and inspiring curriculum. Comments from pupils and parents indicate that this is the case. Pupils name a variety of subjects as favourites and parents comment about motivating and exciting lessons. During the inspection, the range of information to show curriculum breadth was limited. It is early in the school year, so displays of pupils' work are still developing. For the same reason, pupils' books contain little work for subjects beyond English and mathematics. Lack of assessment information in some subjects further limited the evidence you were able to provide about pupils' achievement across the curriculum. Topic books from last year gave an insight into work in history, geography and science. Individual pupil achievement portfolios show the range of subjects studied over time. Termly topic plans provide an overview of pupils' work across the curriculum. After a dip in Year 6 standards and progress in 2014 and 2015, leaders' strong focus on improving achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is understandable. Now, however, you recognise that the development of all other subjects needs to gather pace.
- The school partly meets its aim to provide a curriculum that prepares pupils for future life. In discussion, pupils named values such as respect, tolerance, honesty, justice and forgiveness, and provided some good examples of their relevance in everyday life. Pupils have heard of British values. However, while they experience some of the principles of these values, such as voting for various council members and having a say in aspects of school life, there is little depth to their understanding. Pupils understand the message that everyone is special, of value and deserves respect. They are aware that some countries have different rules and recognise that some countries have rules that are unfair to women. You are fervent in your commitment to promoting all pupils' aspirations. However, curriculum planning shows that when pupils learn about significant people, for

example in history and mathematics, these are predominantly men.

- Pupils explain that they occasionally hear racist and homophobic name-calling. They know that this type of behaviour is wrong, but do not have a secure understanding about why homophobic name-calling is wrong. One said, 'The school doesn't talk about this, but maybe they should, then kids wouldn't get picked on.' Pupils explained that they report any racist or homophobic name-calling to staff. Despite this, the school's behaviour records do not include any incidents of homophobic behaviour.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- assessment information, curriculum planning and subject leaders' checks on pupils' work provide leaders and governors with a better understanding of how well pupils are achieving in all subjects
- the curriculum enables pupils to gain a secure understanding of British values and the full range of diversity and equalities in the Equality Act 2010 so that they are prepared for life in modern Britain
- staff report incidents of homophobic name-calling to senior leaders so that this type of behaviour is included in analyses of behaviour and reports to governors.

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 Tameside. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Margot D'Arcy  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher about the school's evaluation of its work and the priorities for improvement. I met with four members of the governing body and had a telephone conversation with a representative from Tameside local authority. I reviewed a range of school documents, including those relating to safeguarding and behaviour. I considered samples of pupils' work, assessment information and displays of pupils' work around the school. Together we observed learning and pupils' behaviour in a number of lessons. I observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes, in the dining hall and as they moved around the school. I listened to some pupils read and held a formal discussion with some pupils from key stage 2. I spoke to other pupils informally at breaktimes. I spoke to approximately 15 parents as they brought their children to school. I considered 28 responses to the online parent survey, including 16 written

comments. I took account of 46 responses to the online pupil survey and seven responses to the online staff survey.