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Mrs Janet Westray
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Westray

Short inspection of Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Ingol, Preston

Following my visit to the school on 24 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 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 are clear with staff what you expect teaching and learning to look like. You set high standards for the behaviour and conduct of pupils and staff. Staff and leaders work successfully to make full use of every available moment for learning. Leaders make sure that staff have frequent opportunities to learn from one another. Staff and parents say that leaders are visible around the school at the start and end of the day. They say that you listen and respond well to their views. Pupils respect staff and leaders.

You and the governors work closely as a team. Together, you have identified how best to improve governance, as well as to improve pupils' education. You provide more information to help governors understand what the school does well and to spot where further improvement is necessary. As a result, governors are more challenging and review the work of the school with skill and precision.

Leaders seek challenge and support from the local authority and other schools. You make sure that every aspect of the school faces careful review. Your vision for the school is clear and ambitious. You understand how to manage change. Staff support new ideas and readily adapt their practice. You have set out clear priorities for moving the school forward. All staff work to the same vision and take increasingly consistent approaches to their work.

Until the arrival of new leaders in late 2016, this was a school that had lost its way. Upheaval in staffing and high levels of sickness absence affected the work of staff and leaders. The

quality of the school began to decline. How staff felt about their own skills and their work plummeted. Pupils' behaviour became an issue. School finance became a challenge. Governance was not strong. This is no longer the case, and the quality of the school has become good again.

At the previous inspection, inspectors asked the school to improve the quality of teaching and the rate at which pupils make progress in their learning. Since taking up post, you have made sure that staff access training and clear advice about how to improve their work. You are unafraid to take action where improvement in the quality of learning or pupils' progress is slow. Because of the work of leaders and staff, the quality of teaching across the school remains good over time. Current pupils make good progress in their learning. Evidence indicates that activities are now much more enjoyable and worthwhile for pupils. In the sample of lessons you and I visited, we found that teachers check much more carefully that pupils understand what staff expect of them. In mathematics, teachers use assessment carefully to plan learning that challenges pupils of different abilities. Staff now use information and communication technology well to enhance teaching. As recommended at the previous inspection, you have successfully improved pupils' use of grammar and punctuation in their writing. Even so, you and I did agree that activities to develop pupils' writing should be better matched to the needs of the most able pupils in key stage 2.

Children in the early years now experience a curriculum as rich outdoors as indoors. This is because of much work by staff and leaders to improve the provision and use of different resources outdoors. Children learn through a wide range of worthwhile activities in the garden areas, for example to role-play adult roles or to practise their writing.

A further area for improvement at the previous inspection was for the school to improve the work of the wider team of leaders in the school other than English and mathematics. You have achieved this by giving time and support for leaders to undertake their roles. They benefit from opportunities to attend training. Middle leaders now review the impact of teaching on pupils' achievements in their subject and report regularly to governors about their work.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders make sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. They make sure that staff have clear, open communication with families about pupils' education and their home lives. The curriculum and the school website give pupils much information about possible risks to their safety. Leaders support staff by arranging discussions about national and local child protection matters. Staff and leaders record concerns about pupils' well-being carefully. Leaders review all pieces of information routinely about pupils' care and protection. Links between the school and other agencies are good. Pupils have lots of opportunities to share their concerns with staff. Staff use questionnaires to make extra sure that pupils feel happy about their safety.

Governors keep a close check on the safeguarding work of the school. They use a local authority audit to review carefully whether the school meets requirements. They undertake regular training, so they are up to date. They understand their responsibility to protect pupils whenever they work online at school. Governors review site safety and security regularly.

They are currently committed to improving fencing around parts of the school site to provide even better safety for pupils.

Inspection findings

- Leaders' work has turned the school around and set the school on a strong path of improvement. The quality of teaching is good over time. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is now very positive. Relationships with parents are successful. Governance of the school is clear and effective, including well-organised visits to learn about the school's work. Leaders manage school finances carefully. Staff morale is good. Pupils enjoy lessons. They make good progress. Learning is once again fun at Holy Family.
- Leaders are not complacent. They continue to challenge, support and check the work of staff and pupils closely. Leaders know the school in detail because they follow a clear, considered cycle of monitoring the work of staff and pupils. Leaders use information thoughtfully to challenge themselves and staff. Leaders set clear targets for improving the school. Middle leaders help the school to improve. They are well supported in their work by the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- A focus for this inspection was to investigate the apparent dip in key stage 2 in 2017. Year 6 pupils' outcomes in mathematics and reading were untypically low in the national assessments of 2017. Pupils in that class had gaps in their skills and abilities, because of turbulence in staffing over previous years. In the short time that new leaders have been in post, they have acted quickly to provide as much help as possible to pupils. Unfortunately, the legacy of pupils' underachievement proved too much to make up in such a short period. Pupils' writing, checked by the local authority, was much stronger in 2017.
- You and other leaders have taken firm action to strengthen teaching and pupils' learning across key stage 2. Your reviews show that weaknesses in the abilities of Year 6 in 2017 are not evident in other classes in the school. The mathematics curriculum is better planned. Pupils have many opportunities for reasoning and problem-solving. Staff give a renewed focus to pupils learning their multiplication tables as soon as possible. Staff provide well-pitched challenges to pupils to help them to master concepts in mathematics. Teachers make sure that pupils are not over-reliant on help from teaching assistants to complete their work. Pupils told me they love mathematics, that the complexity of problems makes them think hard and that they know how to aim high in their learning. Parents commented very positively about the impact of the school's teaching of mathematics on their children. School information indicates that current pupils, for example those in Year 6, make good progress in mathematics.
- In key stage 2, pupils told me that they enjoy reading. Parents also commented very favourably about their children's improving reading skills. Staff teaching skills, subject knowledge and confidence are growing quickly. This is because of the support arranged by leaders. For example, staff learned a great deal from training about improving pupils' ability to read a text, think about it and understand its meaning. Staff complete thorough assessments of pupils' reading abilities. The quality of literature accessed by older pupils in the school is good due to the exciting range of new books they use in each classroom. School information shows that current pupils' reading skills are developing strongly across Years 3 to 6.
- Current pupils make good progress in their writing in key stage 2. Pupils are starting to

write much more skilfully and confidently. The effective teaching of grammar and punctuation is helping them gain the technical skills they need to succeed as writers. Even so, writing activities do not always challenge the most able pupils enough to help them master their skills and abilities in depth.

- Children attending the Nursery unit and the separate Reception class have regular access to learning outdoors. Staff plan a wide range of worthwhile outdoor experiences for children. For example, during the inspection, I observed children from the Nursery exploring a muddy area. A member of staff skilfully helped them to coordinate their splashing in mud, as much as develop new language. I observed Reception children engrossed in playing the role of a park-keeper-cum-veterinary-surgeon, outdoors. This was possible because of the support and encouragement of staff, as well as the thoughtful provision of a wide range of resources and equipment.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of writing in key stage 2 challenges the most able pupils to develop their skills and knowledge at greater depth.

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

Tim Vaughan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, you and I observed teaching in some classes. We spoke with pupils and looked at their work. I spoke with pupils as they moved around the school. I took account of 18 responses from pupils to an Ofsted questionnaire. I met with you and other leaders to consider your reviews of the school and your plans for improvement. I considered eight responses from staff to an Ofsted questionnaire. I spoke with several parents as they dropped off their children at the start of the school day. I reviewed six responses from parents to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View. I met with six members of the governing body, including the chair. I met with an adviser from Lancashire local authority. I reviewed school arrangements to protect and care for pupils. I reviewed checks made by the school on the suitability of staff to work with pupils.