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Mrs Karen Orrell
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Dear Mrs Orrell

Short inspection of St Anne's RC Primary School Crumpsall Manchester

Following my visit to the school on 31 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 May 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, your governors and staff are fully committed to an inclusive philosophy. Driven by a moral purpose to make certain that all pupils receive a good quality of education, you welcomed around 40 pupils into the St Anne's family as in-year admissions in 2016/2017. Many of these pupils were new arrivals to the country, with little or no understanding of English.

New pupils settle in quickly because they, like all pupils, are cared for exceptionally well. High-quality support, including help from external agencies, is provided for pupils and, where appropriate, for their families. Pupils are interested in learning, have a thirst for knowledge and are keen to improve their skills and to develop their talents. You have achieved this through your belief that all pupils should experience a broad and rich curriculum. You make sure that pupils receive a good balance of academic study, together with many enrichment activities and opportunities to develop into well-rounded British citizens.

In your previous inspection you were asked to improve teaching to accelerate pupils' progress in writing and in mathematics, particularly in Years 4 and 5. During this inspection I wanted to find out how successful you have been in tackling this area for improvement. Your welcoming of so many new pupils during the year has had an impact on overall outcomes in each year group and has masked some of the improvements that you and your leaders have successfully brought about. Pupils who have been members of the school community for some time are making strong

progress in all year groups. New pupils are starting to make progress but at the moment this is at a much slower rate.

About half of the pupils in Reception started school in your Nursery. These pupils start Reception with skills typical for their age. They already know their letter sounds and many have good pencil control and are successful in early letter formation. In contrast, other pupils who have not come through your nursery start Reception with skills well below those typical for their age, resulting in a wide spread of ability. The proportion of pupils who reach a good level of development by the start of Year 1 is below the national average and this difference continues to increase. You are fully aware of this weakness and the new leader for the early years, who started in September, already has plans to tackle this.

You determinedly set about forging stronger relationships with parents, in response to a weakness identified in the last inspection. This has been an amazing success and, as well as being awarded the Leading Parent Partnership Award, you have brought together the whole community. You have achieved this through activities such as the 'fast project', in which parents shared foods from their different cultures. Parents and staff really enjoyed this, and other activities such as parent and child workshops in science and computing, classes to teach parents to speak English and classes to help parents to support their child's reading.

In the last inspection, inspectors asked you to improve your systems for recording and monitoring pupils' behaviour. You quickly introduced a new behaviour policy and a new system to check for patterns or trends in behaviour incidents. You have made sure that very effective support is provided through counsellors and other external agencies for the very small number of pupils who need intensive support to help them to manage their behaviour. Pupils' conduct around the school, including at lunch and playtimes, is exemplary. They are polite, courteous and respectful and look after one another. Pupils are exceptionally proud of their school. They love school and this is reflected in their consistently above-average attendance.

During this inspection I also wanted to find out if governance continues to be effective as this was identified as a strength in the previous inspection. Governors are knowledgeable, committed and skilled individuals who have a good grasp of the strengths of the school and also where there is further work to do to make the school even better.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of good quality. All staff give a high priority to keeping pupils safe and fully understand their responsibility to ensure that this happens. Staff are confident in knowing the correct procedures to follow if they have concerns about a pupil's safety. This is because the safeguarding training and information you give to staff is detailed and up to date. Procedures are followed correctly to make sure that staff appointed to work in the school have been thoroughly checked before appointment. Some governors have completed safer

recruitment training and at least one of these governors is always present on each interview panel to make sure that recruitment procedures are robust.

Pupils are confident they are well looked after in school and say that they feel very safe. This is a view endorsed by parents. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet and social media. Pupils gave clear examples of how you and your staff keep them safe from threats outside school. For example, they know the purpose of the recently introduced 'lock-down' procedure and told me confidently that 'no-one gets through the front door and past reception unless they have been checked'.

You have many vulnerable pupils and some families are particularly 'needy' of additional help. You, and your team of other safeguarding leads, make referrals for support as appropriate and follow these up with great tenacity if you do not receive a rapid response.

Inspection findings

- Pupils love this school and particularly the rich and engaging opportunities you have created for them to develop their talents and interests. Pupils enthusiastically told me about their learning in Spanish, and also in Chinese through a weekly Skype conference. Pupils are encouraged to learn music and to play a musical instrument. Many play the ukulele, percussion and guitar and there is an active choir group, who sing to elderly people in a nursing home and at other school events. Pupils told me everyone is welcome in their school and explained how they use 'new arrivals' to learn about other cultures and faiths. Pupils are immensely proud of their school.
- You have led a whole-school focus to improve the quality of writing across the school. You have brokered effective support to help you achieve this through an external literacy consultant. As a result, there is now a more consistent approach to developing writing across the school through the use of high-quality texts for pupils. Handwriting is clearly a challenge for some key stage 1 pupils. Plans are already in place to target this weakness that you have accurately identified.
- Speech, language and communication skills are supported well in the early years as a precursor to storytelling to aid writing. Children very enthusiastically told me about the mess that had appeared in their classroom, which they thought was because a Gruffalo had visited overnight. Children were immediately interested in learning and keen to start to write simple words. Your new leader for early years has plans to improve literacy assessment and the way information is used in planning to make sure that more children reach a good level of development and are ready to start Year 1.
- You have provided teachers with the support and training they need to improve teaching in mathematics. Teachers skilfully use well-targeted questions to encourage pupils to prove, and to show how they have found, their answers. As a result, pupils' reasoning skills are developing well. Teachers plan pupils' work carefully to make sure that they have to think harder about their work. Pupils are developing their ability to identify the most efficient methods of calculation.

However, pupils differ markedly in their confidence in using mental strategies.

- You have developed a strong and supportive network to improve teaching across the school and across schools in your cluster. Teachers readily share resources, including those from a mathematics hub. You have made sure that teachers have time to observe each other's practice and to observe colleagues in other schools. You use your monitoring carefully to check on the impact of this work. Teachers and teaching assistants greatly appreciate these opportunities for their professional development. As a result there is greater consistency in the quality of teaching across the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the strategies used to improve the teaching of writing and mathematics are continued so that all pupils make better progress than they have done in the past
- plans to improve assessment and monitoring of children's work in the early years are quickly implemented so that intensive support and extra help is targeted precisely at the children who need it to fill gaps in their development.

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

Yours sincerely

Denah Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

A range of activities was carried out during this inspection to gather information on the key lines of enquiry. For example, I met with you, other leaders and staff and a group of governors, and I had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I talked with parents as they collected their children at the end of the school day. I also considered a letter written to me by a parent and one from the school nurse visiting to support dental health. I talked with pupils when leaders joined me in visits to lessons, listened to pupils read and met with representatives from the school council. A wide range of documentation was scrutinised to find out about safeguarding procedures in the school.