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15 March 2018

Mr Richard Parkes  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Parkes

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

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 2018, 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 April 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. 'Loving to learn, learning to love' is the school motto. This is reflected in daily life. Pupils are eager to learn. St Teresa's RC Primary School is a welcoming and inclusive school where leaders support staff and pupils to 'do their best'. Pupils, with whom I spoke, explained to me that 'everyone is kind and respectful'. They described how their teachers provide them with challenging work, alongside help and support. As a result, pupils enjoy school and they know they are doing well.

Parents and carers are extremely positive about the nurturing community you have created. A parent describes the school as 'wonderful, warm and friendly'. This is typical of parents' responses. They speak very highly about the care and support their children receive from 'approachable staff'. Staff are extremely proud to work at the school. They explained to me how your clear vision has ensured that they receive clear guidance and direction from leaders. This is sustaining good teaching and allowing pupils to make strong progress.

Following your appointment, you quickly gained an accurate and incisive view of the strengths of the school as well as those aspects that require further development. You have acted without hesitation. You ensure that training matches school priorities and teachers' needs. This is improving the quality of teaching. Staff feel that they are well supported. They are enthusiastic about their roles. Staff are motivated and committed to securing even better outcomes for pupils.

Governors have an equally accurate understanding of the strengths of the school. They ask appropriate questions of leaders. This is ensuring that the school is going from strength to strength. Governors were able to show me how they have challenged leaders. For example, members of the governing body explained to me how leaders' effective actions have secured improvements in pupils' attendance. Leaders and governors are acutely aware of the improvements required to raise further the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development in Reception.

The leadership team has successfully addressed areas identified at the last inspection. For example, leaders and governors have completely redesigned and developed the school library. Pupils now have access to an area in school where they can enjoy reading. Despite financial constraints, you have invested in a wide range of new texts. Pupils now have access to a variety of books. This is helping to improve pupils' attitudes to reading. As a result, all pupils, particularly boys, are more engaged in their reading. They read more widely and more often.

Pupils act as reading 'ambassadors' in Years 5 and 6. They promote a love of reading across the school, particularly with younger pupils in key stage 1. Staff also provide workshops for parents. These workshops allow parents to better support their children with their reading at home. Since the last inspection, leaders have firmly embedded a consistent approach to the teaching of reading across the school. Leaders' focus on reading has secured better outcomes for pupils. For example, a much higher proportion of pupils in Year 1 passed the phonics screening check in 2017. Similarly, pupils at key stage 2 make more rapid progress in their reading.

At the previous inspection, inspectors also asked you to improve further the quality of teaching. You have achieved this by providing staff with the opportunity to share strong practice. Teachers work together on improving different aspects of learning. For example, this collaboration is helping to increase the level of challenge in learning. Teachers now routinely check on pupils' learning. This allows teachers to adapt activities for pupils to make them appropriately challenging. This was evident in pupils' writing in Year 2 where teachers challenge pupils to use suffixes to improve their writing. As a result, the most able pupils make faster progress in their writing.

Leaders also ensure that teachers have the opportunity to work with professionals in other local schools. This is helping teachers to sharpen further the accuracy of their assessment, particularly the assessment of pupils' writing at key stage 2. Improvements in teachers' assessments allow teachers to match accurately learning activities to pupils' needs.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The system to check that adults are safe to work with children is secure. Since your appointment, you have created a culture of vigilance. Staff receive

regular training on safeguarding. This training is up to date. Staff are very clear about the procedures they must follow if they have concerns about a pupil. Records of work with external agencies are well organised. These records show that staff respond in a timely manner to ensure that pupils and their families receive appropriate support.

Pupils feel safe and happy in school. They are confident there is an adult they can go to if they have a problem. Pupils also learn how to keep themselves safe. They demonstrate a strong understanding of how to be secure online because they learn about e-safety as part of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 6 develop an awareness of how to stay safe on the road through the 'Bikeability' scheme.

Parents and staff alike share the confidence that pupils are safe in school. Pupils report that bullying is rare. Should incidents of bullying arise, pupils explained to me that teachers are effective at dealing with bullying. Pupils with whom I spoke show respect and tolerance for pupils of different faiths, backgrounds and families.

### **Inspection findings**

- I was interested to know about rates of pupil absence. This is because, in the past, rates of absence have been higher than the national average. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- You have approached the task of improving pupils' attendance with tenacity. Staff carefully monitor pupils' rates of absence. This ensures that you identify swiftly those pupils whose attendance is causing concern. Staff act quickly. They provide pupils and their families with the support they need to ensure that pupils maintain good rates of attendance. As a result, the attendance of all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, is now above the national average.
- I was also interested to know about the rates of progress made by pupils in writing, particularly the most able pupils at key stage 2. Since your appointment, you have improved the way in which teachers monitor pupils' progress in writing. This ensures that teachers monitor the progress of all pupils, including the most able pupils. As a result, teachers identify which pupils are falling behind in their writing. Teachers and leaders hold regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress and make plans for the next steps in their learning. Additional support is provided where it is most needed and this allows pupils to catch up.
- You showed me pupils' work, reflecting how the strategies you have put in place across the school are leading to rapid progress in pupils' writing. Teachers' high expectations of pupils are securing better outcomes for pupils. For example, pupils in Year 3 use speech marks accurately in their writing. Teachers plan learning that is matched accurately to pupils' needs. Teachers challenge the most able pupils to make faster progress. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth in their writing is increasing.
- There has been a decline in the proportion of children, particularly girls, in Reception who achieve a good level of development. This is especially the case in

literacy and mathematics. This is an area you are already addressing. You have taken the necessary steps to stabilise staffing in the early years. This is having a positive effect on children's progress. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development is increasing.

- Children in Nursery benefit from a range of opportunities provided by teachers to support their development through independent play. Nonetheless, you acknowledge that there is more to do to ensure that children in Reception have the opportunity to develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics. We agreed that there could be more opportunities for children to develop these skills in independent play areas. This is especially the case for their learning in the outdoors.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide children in Reception with more opportunities to develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills in order to improve the proportion of children achieving a good level of 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 Trafford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Emma Gregory  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders, a group of teachers and a group of pupils. Leaders accompanied me on visits to classes where I observed teaching and learning across subjects. I looked at work produced by pupils in writing at key stage 1 and 2. I also looked at work of children in Nursery and Reception. I listened to some key stage 1 pupils read.

I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day. I also spoke with an adviser from the local authority and some members of the governing body. I examined a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding and leaders' analyses of attendance information. I considered the school improvement plan and leaders' self-evaluation.

I also checked on the contents of the school's website. I considered 57 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 14 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. I also took into account 68 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and 57 responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text facility.