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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



15 March 2019

Mr Jim Graves
Headteacher
St Anne's RC Primary School
Greenacres Road
Oldham
Lancashire
OL4 1HP

Dear Mr Graves

Short inspection of St Anne's RC Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 February 2019, 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 November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your staff are committed to raising academic achievement for all pupils. Working with your staff, you are providing a supportive and caring environment that enables all pupils, regardless of background, to flourish.

On your appointment 13 months ago, you quickly identified a number of weaknesses in the school and immediately introduced a thorough programme of change. You established a new staffing structure, reviewed and revised the deployment of staff and provided additional training where necessary. You were unremitting in addressing underperformance. You invested in new resources, revised key policies and procedures and established a programme of refurbishment to provide a more attractive environment for learning. Actions you have taken have already shown impact. For example, a focus on reading has ensured that progress has improved and is now in line with the national average at the end of key stage 2.

You provide effective leadership and have a clear vision for continued improvement. You and your deputy headteacher have made improvements to issues identified at the last inspection. You have an accurate view of the strengths of the school and the further improvements that are needed. You recognise the value of the school improvement plan in helping you to monitor the progress that the school is making towards achieving its targets. However, the plan lacks precision. As a result, governors are not able to monitor the effectiveness of key strategies closely enough.

You are now developing an effective senior leadership team and providing more staff with middle leadership opportunities. The staff team appreciate your support and feel valued. They believe that the school is continuing to improve since your appointment and are committed to helping you to develop the school further. Staff morale is high.

Governors play a key role in supporting the work of the school. They are ambitious for the school to succeed. Governors speak with enthusiasm about the ethos of the school. They have attended relevant training and are knowledgeable and skilled in a range of areas to support the school's work effectively. They ask pertinent questions at meetings and hold school leaders to account for school performance.

St Anne's School provides a warm, welcoming environment where pupils enjoy learning. The care of your pupils is at the heart of the culture you have created. Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. Conduct across the school during the inspection was of the highest standard. Pupils respect each other. They work well together in lessons and support one another. Pupils enjoy excellent relationships with staff. From the moment they start the school day to the moment they leave for home, pupils are encouraged to try their best. They are confident and have well-developed, positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted. British values are threaded through all aspects of the school's work. Pupils typically commented that British values ensure that 'everyone has the right to live life to the full, and a responsibility to ensure others are allowed to do so too'.

Parents and carers who responded to Parent View would recommend your school to other families. They believe their children are safe and happy. Leaders and teachers are always available to discuss any issues of concern, so they can be dealt with swiftly. The following comment typically sums up the views of parents: 'The best decision I made was to send my children to this school.' You continue to develop strong links with parents and the community. Your pastoral leader's dedicated work has had a marked impact on improving attendance for some vulnerable families.

Safeguarding is effective.

Keeping children safe is a priority at St Anne's School. You and your leadership team ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You make checks to ensure that newly appointed staff are suitable to work with children. You know your families well and understand the issues facing the local community. You and your team of safeguarding leaders follow up each concern to ensure that vulnerable children and their families receive timely and appropriate help. You build strong relationships with parents and provide support, but challenge where appropriate, such as when attendance is an issue. Training is up to date for all adults who work in school. As a result, staff are vigilant and know what they need to do should they have any concerns about pupils' welfare or the conduct of adults.

Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their high rates of attendance and punctuality. They learn in a caring environment that is tolerant and free from

discrimination. Pupils appreciate that they are well looked after, feel safe and trust the adults who look after them. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils know about road safety and not giving out personal details to anyone online. You provide pupils with a wide range of information about how they can stay safe through planned opportunities in the curriculum. In conversation with me, they talked about different types of bullying and understood the need to report it immediately if it occurs.

Inspection findings

- Senior leaders have put in place a range of strategies to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. 'Non-negotiables', agreed with all staff, have ensured that high, consistent expectations for teaching and learning have been embedded across the school. In lessons, good use is made of the available teaching time to maximise learning. Opportunities to reinforce basic skills are used effectively in lessons. Pupils are encouraged to write well. They are given regular reminders about presentation. Skilled teaching assistants effectively support pupils' learning. Books show standards of presentation are increasing across all subjects.
- Pupils' results in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 were below national averages in 2017 and 2018. You have acted quickly to improve the teaching of phonics. You have implemented a new phonics programme, in which all staff have been trained. This new programme is well resourced. You have appointed a phonics leader who provides ongoing support to staff and monitors pupils' progress. The phonics teaching that I observed demonstrated a consistent, systematic approach together with strong teacher subject knowledge. As a result, pupils are making good progress. Books are now sent home, ensuring that pupils are able to practise their newly learned skills. Parent workshops enable them to understand the new programme and support their child's reading at home. However, these initiatives are relatively new and the challenge for the school is to ensure that these recent improvements to the teaching of phonics are embedded and sustained.
- In 2017 and 2018, no disadvantaged pupils attained greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1. Therefore, I wanted to explore how you are using the additional funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make at least the same progress as others nationally. You have identified the barriers affecting their learning and have established a clear strategy to ensure that all interventions have a sharp focus. Your staff know these pupils well and provide extra support to help them learn well in lessons. Work in their books shows that disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points. Leaders ensure that part of the funding is used to enable disadvantaged pupils to access a wide range of enrichment experiences, such as trips, residential visits and learning to play a musical instrument. This allows this group of pupils to take part in all that the school has to offer. You regularly monitor the provision for all disadvantaged pupils and check their progress. School information shows that the most able disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 are being challenged and supported to make stronger progress in reading, writing

and mathematics.

- Leaders implemented a new curriculum in September 2018. Key to your vision is that enrichment is embedded across the curriculum to ensure that learning is meaningful for pupils. The curriculum sets out to develop confident, well-rounded and happy learners. Visits, visitors and special theme days are woven into each topic. Children described their learning and how they enjoyed their topic work. Evidence of work in books shows that pupils are given good opportunities to deepen their learning in a range of subjects across the wider curriculum.
- Middle leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics are enthusiastic about their subject areas. They carry out checks on the quality of learning in their areas of responsibility; they look at books and teachers' curriculum plans and talk to pupils. However, leadership of some subjects in the wider curriculum is not as well embedded as that of English and mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the recent improvements to the teaching of phonics are embedded so more pupils reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check
- the work of subject leaders in subjects other than English and mathematics is further developed so it has a greater impact on teaching, learning and assessment
- the school improvement plan is focused more precisely to enable governors to monitor the progress made towards school targets.

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

Yours sincerely

Aleksandra Hartshorne
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher and explained my lines of enquiry. I also met with members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, the subject leaders for history and design technology and the pastoral leader. I also met with a group of pupils, a class teacher and a teaching assistant. I took account of the 10 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and six free-text comments. There were 20 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff and 23 responses to the pupil questionnaire. We visited classes together in Reception, key stage 1 and key stage 2. We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and I looked at samples of pupils' work. I listened to

three pupils read. I viewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance and the plans for further improvement. I considered a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding. I examined the school's website to check that it meets statutory requirements on the publication of specified information.