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28 June 2019

Mrs Sarah Bernto  
Acting Headteacher  
St Anne's Catholic Primary School  
Washington Road  
Caversham  
Reading  
RG4 5AA

Dear Mrs Bernto

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

Following my visit to the school on 20 June 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 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. At the heart of this is a strong, shared commitment to every child's success, underpinned by the school's ethos 'live, love and learn as children of God'. All pupils, regardless of background, race, faith or disability are cared for and supported to achieve. Together with staff, you have ensured that the school continues to prioritise the right areas for pupils to succeed. The school's current development plan is clear, precise and well measured. It addresses the issues raised as a result of the school's previous inspection and those arising from national tests and assessments. This affirms that leaders know the school well and act promptly to make improvements that benefit the pupils' academic and personal development.

You are open about the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, you have an accurate picture of what the school does well and have rightly prioritised areas for improvement next year. You have successfully maintained the upward trend at the end of key stages 1 and 2 as well as good teaching in the early years. The latter ensures that pupils get off to a strong start.

The school is a small but close-knit community. There is a strong sense of family values. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and caring. The school is highly inclusive. Pupils with all different types of need are welcomed and feel part of the school community. While parents are generally positive about the school, a few feel that their children are not challenged sufficiently. Inspection findings

support this view. This is an area that is holding the school back. Leaders know this too and recognise that the most able pupils are not always challenged to achieve the highest standards possible in writing, mathematics and the wider curriculum. Pupils are doing well but some could do even better.

At the time of the last inspection, leaders were asked particularly to improve systems to review pupils' progress and to make best use of assessment information. You have introduced an effective system for tracking the progress that groups of pupils make in English and mathematics. Leaders' careful analysis of progress information ensures that support is given where it is needed. As a result, most groups of pupils who were previously doing less well are now making rapid progress. Overall, pupils make strong progress but you rightly recognise that there is more to do to build on this success across the wider curriculum.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements for pupils are secure and reflect current statutory guidance. The single central record meets all requirements and is well maintained. Pre-recruitment checks on the suitability of all staff and volunteers are diligently carried out and leaders review these processes regularly. Records are detailed and of good quality. You have ensured that all staff have received regular training and updates. As a result, they are well informed about current safeguarding practice, including, for example, that related to the 'Prevent' duty, female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation. Staff are swift to follow up any concerns and seek appropriate support from external agencies as necessary.

Pupils feel happy and safe in school. They say that they can talk to a member of staff if they have any concerns. The school teaches pupils how to stay safe in and out of school, including online. Your caring and inclusive ethos allows pupils in different year groups to mix and form friendships so that instances of bullying are rare and are dealt with swiftly.

### **Inspection findings**

- We agreed four lines of enquiry. The first line of enquiry explored the achievement of the most able pupils in mathematics in key stage 2. The proportion of pupils achieving the standards expected for their age is well above the national average. However, the high prior-attaining pupils made less fast rates of progress than their peers. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard was just below the national average in 2018.
- Leaders have analysed the outcomes from the national tests for last year and put in place measures to support pupils to make better progress. They have provided training for staff and a highly individualised coaching programme to ensure that teachers are confident to teach number fluency and tackle multi-step problems. As a result of careful modelling and clear instruction, pupils enjoy their work in mathematics and are keen to persevere. Most make good progress, although books, and discussion with pupils, show that the most able pupils would relish a

greater degree of challenge.

- The second key line of enquiry related to reading and writing in key stage 1. The proportion of pupils passing the phonics check at the end of Year 1 has been just below the national average for the past two years. Attainment in reading by pupils at the end of Year 2 remains just above the national average but attainment in writing, in 2018, was below national average.
- School leaders identified writing as an area for further improvement last academic year and concentrated on improving the quality of teaching, working on extending pupils' vocabulary. Through a rigorous system of monitoring, feedback and mentoring, less experienced teachers have thrived. As a result, pupils are making rapid rates of progress with an increasing proportion on track to meet the expected standard. Progress in writing is visible in pupils' books across the year groups. Pupils benefit from clear modelling of tasks and editing their work in response to teachers' feedback. While the proportion achieving the higher standards was well above the national average last year, you rightly observe that some of the most able pupils would benefit from an even greater level of challenge in their writing tasks.
- Phonics is consistently and accurately taught throughout Reception and key stage 1. Pupils benefit from skilled teaching and respond well to the variety of strategies for learning which are carefully planned to meet their needs. They enjoy their lessons and are motivated to persevere. Consequently, outcomes for pupils are improving.
- This year, leaders have given independent reading a high profile in order to foster greater enjoyment of reading. This has been successful. Pupils love to choose their own books and read for pleasure. One pupil had chosen a book that appeared to be easy for him. When we discussed the book, it was evident that he was greatly appreciating the humour contained within the story, saying, 'Of course a snail doesn't say "meow"'. Other pupils were reluctant to speak with adults because they 'just [wanted] to be left alone to read'.
- Staff have analysed reading papers and have developed their reading planning to develop any potential weak skills in comprehension such as inference and deduction. Teachers track individual progress carefully and put additional support in place when it is needed. As a result, outcomes remain broadly in line with national averages but are set to improve.
- The third key line of enquiry we agreed to consider was the quality of provision for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils in receipt of the pupil premium funding did not do as well as their peers in 2017 but did better than their peers in 2018. This is because leaders carefully track the progress of this group of pupils. They individually assess the needs of each pupil and rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of each intervention. Where an intervention is not successful, leaders ensure that a different approach is used. Consequently, pupils, throughout the school, are continuing to make good progress.
- The final key line of enquiry explored the quality of the wider curriculum. Leaders

at all levels rightly acknowledge that the wider curriculum has not had quite the same attention as English and mathematics in the recent past and have already taken steps to address this issue. Over time, pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum. Nevertheless, there is too much inconsistency in quality between subjects and classes. For example, the teaching of religious education is skilled and thorough. Pupils' books, across the school, show evidence of good teaching and consistently thoughtful reflection. Standards of work in these books are high and pupils take pride in their achievements. In other subjects the standards of work are too variable and pupils, at all levels, would benefit from a greater degree of challenge in their work.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils are consistently challenged so that a larger proportion than currently achieve the higher standards, particularly in writing and mathematics
- the wider curriculum contains sufficient breadth and challenge so that standards are consistently high across the curriculum.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Birmingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Reading. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Clare Morgan  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and governors to review your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. Together, we visited classes at work across the school. I looked at a range of work in pupils' books, observed standards of behaviour around the school and spoke with pupils. I met parents before school and scrutinised 25 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, including 15 free-text comments. I considered 18 responses to the staff survey and 42 responses to the pupil survey. I looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, and checked the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, including those related to recruitment.