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Mrs Kathleen McKeating
Headteacher
St John the Baptist Roman Catholic Primary School, Padiham
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Dear Mrs McKeating

Short inspection of St John the Baptist Roman Catholic Primary School, Padiham

Following my visit to the school on 1 February 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. The pupils I spoke to say they feel privileged to be part of your school. The nurturing environment oozes warmth because of the excellent relationships between staff and pupils. This reflects the compassionate approach of school leaders. Parents and carers cannot praise the school enough because of the support that pupils and parents receive from staff. Your 'Jet Set Angels' project exemplifies the school's Christian values, which has seen pupils' keyrings distributed around the world as a symbol of hope. This global initiative serves to remind parents and pupils of their sense of belonging to this unique school.

You are a committed and dynamic headteacher. Your highly effective senior leadership team clearly evaluates the school's provision so that leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. In response to the recommendations made at the last inspection, you have ensured that pupils respond well to the feedback that they are provided with. Pupils now have a good understanding of what they are learning because teachers take time to explain this clearly. Pupils' presentation, particularly in writing, has also improved. You have effectively tackled the weakest teaching in the school and have provided development for staff to enhance their skills. As a result, pupils' progress and attainment in writing has improved. However, you are aware that the school can still do more. You have correctly identified a need for more opportunities for pupils to apply their reasoning skills in mathematics. As part of this inspection, we also agreed that the evaluation of the pupil premium funding could be

more clearly reported to governors to demonstrate the impact on pupils' progress and attainment.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Safeguarding is a high priority and staff have a good awareness of procedures. Leaders hold weekly meetings to discuss pupils and their needs feed into a strong culture of vigilance which is shared by all. Annual training for staff and governors is well attended and relates well to the statutory guidance for safeguarding.

Pupils feel safe at the school. The relationships they have with staff are exceptional. They appreciate the fact that staff get to know them and they are reassured by this. Effective teaching ensures that pupils know how to keep safe, including when online.

Inspection findings

- As part of this inspection we agreed to look at how effectively leaders are addressing the declining standards in key stage 1 phonics. Convincing action has been taken to remedy weaknesses in the teaching of phonics. Pupils are now taught in small groups according to their stage of learning. This focused approach is ensuring that pupils have sufficient time to learn sounds in depth before moving on to more challenging content. Leaders keep a close eye on pupils' progress and attainment and use this information to help pupils who need further support. Adults ensure that interventions are characterised by high-energy tasks which foster an enjoyment of language. Pupils are clear about what they are learning. For example, Year 2 pupils can confidently say whether or not they should remove a consonant from a word when adding a suffix. The result is that pupils in key stage 1 are developing fluency and expression when reading, particularly the most able pupils. Pupils also use their phonics skills with increasing success when writing so that, by the end of key stage 1, their spelling is accurate and their progress is never less than good.
- We also agreed to look at the difference that the pupil premium funding makes to disadvantaged pupils' progress in mathematics. The mathematics leader is diligent in tracking pupils' progress. Where support is needed, funding is used to put this in place. From the sample of work seen, and from looking at pupils' work in classes, it is evident that disadvantaged pupils make good progress. The mathematics leader has a sharp awareness of the quality of teaching and learning in the school. She has already identified that there need to be further opportunities for all pupils to reason mathematically, particularly the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. We also agreed that the plans for the use of the pupil premium do not define clear enough outcomes for success and, as a result, governors are not able to evaluate fully the difference that this funding is making to pupils' learning.
- Finally, we agreed to look at how effectively leaders engage and communicate with parents. Parents cannot speak highly enough of the school. Leaders provide daily text messages and weekly newsletters informing them of events. They are happy with the information that they receive at parents' evenings, which focus on pupils' progress and attainment. Parents responding to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Many parents mention the personal support

that they have received from the school. This is where your school excels. Staff are approachable and will go the extra mile to support parents' needs and those of their children. The school's strong Christian values shine through the actions of senior leaders.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders clearly evaluate the use of the pupil premium funding so that governors can measure the effect of the actions taken to improve pupils' progress
- there are more opportunities for the most able, and the most able disadvantaged, pupils to use their mathematical reasoning skills to challenge their thinking further.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Bentham
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with leaders and governors to discuss safeguarding and aspects of the school's leadership and management. Together, we visited all classes and spoke to pupils about their work informally during lessons. I reviewed documentation about safeguarding, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff. I spoke with pupils, both formally and informally. I conducted a scrutiny of pupils' writing and mathematics books. I heard pupils read as part of their work in lessons, including phonics lessons, and heard a small group of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils read. I reviewed documentation, which included the monitoring of teaching and learning, the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses and the school development plan. I took into account 15 responses to the staff survey. I also spoke with parents at the start of the school day and took account of 39 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View**.**