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Mrs Sue Holt
Headteacher
St Anne's CE (Aided) Primary School
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Dear Mrs Holt

Short inspection of St Anne's CE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 March 2016, 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 March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Since the last inspection, you have continued to set a very clear vision and have strengthened the school further. All staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire strongly agree that they are very proud to be part of St Anne's. This is down to your assured leadership and the way you bring staff together in a shared eagerness to improve the school. Staff, parents, pupils and governors appreciate your caring and approachable style and have confidence and trust in your leadership. You have instilled a sense of teamwork among staff and established high expectations for pupils. Together, you ensure that there is a strong focus on achieving the very best for your pupils.

Middle leaders are enthusiastic and feel empowered and accountable for pupils' learning. The very large majority of parents who spoke to me, or responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, are positive about the school and would recommend it to others. A number of parents particularly appreciate that you are quick to respond to issues and are always available to talk to. For example, several commented on how you and the staff are always 'willing to listen' and someone 'is always there'. This is a happy, purposeful school where pupils, parents and staff have a strong sense of belonging.

Since the previous inspection, pupils' progress has continued to accelerate across the school. The vast majority of pupils make expected progress by the end of key stage 2 and attainment in both key stage 1 and 2 is above that expected of pupils

of a similar age. You are mindful that more pupils need to be offered greater challenge, in order to make more than expected progress. The plans you have put in place are already noticeably leading to improvement in pupils' learning.

Since the previous inspection, the curriculum has developed considerably. You have responded well to the recent changes in the curriculum and pupils respond well to a variety of lively and engaging activities. The way in which topics are introduced fuels pupils' enthusiasm and excitement. It gives purpose to their writing and a context to the skills and knowledge they are learning.

At the previous inspection, inspectors identified a need to improve attainment in writing through opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills across the curriculum. They also required the school to improve teaching by ensuring lessons had a brisk start, so that pupils start their learning at a faster pace and ensuring that the most-able pupils are challenged consistently so they make the best possible progress.

Leaders have addressed all of these aspects effectively, for the most part, and have ensured that the following improvements have taken place:

- Writing is given a high priority throughout the school. Opportunities to write across the curriculum are clearly evident, as are occasions to write for different purposes to a high standard. Your insistence on linking high-quality books to topics ensures that there are not only plenty of chances to read, but to see different types of writing. This provides an interesting motivation for pupils' written work.
- All lessons start promptly and pupils are highly motivated in lessons. A much greater proportion of time is spent on activities where pupils can practise their skills. The most-able pupils are being given activities that are more challenging.

Safeguarding is effective.

There are good, well-maintained systems in place in all areas of safeguarding and these are understood by staff. Regular and appropriate training for staff is undertaken and up to date. Leaders have effective relationships with other agencies and you and your team ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are met.

Pupils say they feel very safe and well cared for in school. They are unanimous that adults will help them if needed. Pupils, particularly older ones, talked knowledgeably about the ways that staff have taught them to keep safe. They talk confidently about staying safe in a range of situations including personally and online. The very large majority of parents feel that you and the staff keep their children safe and well looked after. Pupils are very happy and keen to come to school.

Inspection findings

- You have an honest and accurate view of the school's strengths and the areas that need further development. Everyone in school is clear about the direction in which they are heading. You and your leadership team have good capacity for further improvement.
- You have a measured, thoughtful approach and have focused effectively on establishing consistency in the quality of teaching and learning. You know each teacher's strengths and areas for development accurately; as a result you are confident about who your most effective teachers are and who still need some support. I agree that it would be useful for you and your team to take some time to look at outstanding practice in other schools. This will support your plans for the next stage of your school's improvement journey.
- Governors play an informed role in evaluating the school's effectiveness and know the school well. Governors have used their own experiences and expertise well to support the school. They care about the school and are keen to celebrate success, but are also rigorous in challenging where needed.
- The information you gather about pupils' progress is used by all leaders, teachers and governors effectively to identify which pupils or groups are making progress and which need some additional support or challenge. Your half-termly checks in some year groups, and termly pupil progress meetings, ensure that all staff feel responsible for pupils' learning. This gives teachers an opportunity to reflect on how they could further adapt their teaching to meet their pupils' needs.
- Your committed team of middle leaders are keen to make an important contribution to furthering the improvements in school. They talk with assurance about pupils' learning in their areas of responsibility. They enjoy regular professional discussions about how pupils learn best. Staff say they really enjoy the new way of working, and pupils are able to talk confidently about what they are learning and what they need to do next.
- You have correctly identified the need to improve further the attainment of pupils and to offer more challenge in lessons so that pupils have the chance to make more than expected progress. To this end, you have taken decisive action, including changing your curriculum and developing an inventive way to encourage pupils of all ages to talk about their learning. This is already having an impact on speeding up their progress.
- Attendance is above the national average and is a strength. You have excellent systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality and you use them to great effect; for example, providing each teacher with a regular analysis and breakdown of their class's attendance so that it can be compared to individual pupils' progress. There are a range of effective rewards for good attendance. There has not been any persistent absence in school for over a year because of the high expectations and importance you place on pupils being in school. Where families are struggling, you are firm but supportive and exercise appropriate sensitivity on an individual family basis.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are good. Pupils are polite, kind and thoughtful to each

other. Conduct around the school building and in class is of a high standard. You and governors shared with me your plans to invest in new playground equipment in order to reinforce and promote resilience, cooperation and team skills outside.

- There are many opportunities for pupils to develop respect, compassion and tolerance through the school's 'Golden Promises'. These are a set of standards and ways to behave based on faith and British values that all pupils know extremely well and can relate to their life and situations. For example, when I asked if pupils ever say unkind things to each other, pupils all agreed it is infrequent and is dealt with straight away by adults. One pupil concluded that it rarely happens because 'it would be breaking one of our golden promises'. British values were thoroughly explored in Year 6 recently through a range of activities, stimulated by a visit from a magistrate to talk about British law and equality. The experience concluded with the class playing a leading role in a memorable debate in the local magistrates' court.
- A very small number of parents asked me to consider how the school deals with bullying. The majority of parents who shared their views with me either did not comment on bullying or if they did it was to say any bullying was rare and quickly followed up by the school. Other inspection evidence confirmed that this is the case.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge well to provide engaging and motivating activities in class. As a result, pupils have a very good attitude to learning. Teachers use questioning skilfully to prompt pupils' thinking. Work in pupils' books shows good progress over time. Teaching assistants are knowledgeable and make a valuable contribution to supporting pupils' learning and meeting pupils' needs.
- Children make good progress in the early years, the large majority from starting points that are lower than usual for children their age, particularly in communication, literacy and mathematics. Children enjoy engaging in a wide range of stimulating, good-quality learning experiences, both indoors and outdoors. As a result, children are happy and keen to learn. Staff have high expectations and, as in the rest of the school, there is an emphasis on speaking; consequently many children talk confidently in front of others. The good use of assessment information ensures that provision and learning are matched very closely to children's needs. Adults have very positive relationships with children and teach and support them well in their learning. The strong provision within the Nursery class prepares children extremely well to thrive in Reception.

Next steps for the school

Leaders, including governors, should ensure that:

- they continue to improve further the attainment and progress of pupils in key stage 2 so that a higher proportion make more than expected progress
- they provide opportunities for teachers to learn from outstanding practice in teaching and learning in other schools

- they implement the plans for the key stage 2 outdoor area so that it can be used to further the personal development of pupils, particularly in promoting resilience, cooperation and team skills.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of Children's Services for Oldham City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sue Eastwood
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, members of your middle leadership team and the staff responsible for maintaining your attendance and safeguarding records. I also met with pupils, five governors including the chair of the governing body, your school improvement partner, and a representative of Oldham local authority. I visited lessons and I scrutinised pupils' work. I took account of 20 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views of 11 parents spoken to before the school day. I also considered a letter handed to me by a parent. I took account of 11 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during lunchtime. I looked at a number of documents, including: information about pupils' achievement; your school self-evaluation; the school improvement plan, behaviour and incident logs, and documents and checks relating to safeguarding.