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Mrs Annemarie Bell
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Dear Mrs Bell

Short inspection of Holy Cross and All Saints RC Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

There have been significant changes to the school since then. Roughly half the teaching staff are new to the school, there is a new chair of governors and the early years leader is new to that role. In addition, the school is increasing in size. The growth in the school's roll is a planned change in response to the local community's need for more primary school places. This has also meant that the proportion of pupils who do not speak English at home has increased. The school has recently opened a new building to accommodate the increasing number of pupils. You have made sure that these changes are used as opportunities, for example by using the staff changes to make sure that teachers' skills are well matched to their classes' needs.

You and your colleagues have created a positive and welcoming school. The school's faith ethos underpins its work. This is captured in the school motto 'Love Jesus, love learning, love life'. You have used this as the basis of your work to encourage pupils to be positive in their approach. Each year group is expected to meet its own particular challenge, such as 'Never give up' for Year 5 and 'Remember to challenge yourself' for Year 2. These principles are linked to particular saints and bible verses which pupils know about. You also provide other opportunities for pupils to develop their wider views about the world. For example, wall displays include examples of inspirational women and posters which challenge stereotypes about people with different backgrounds.

At the previous inspection, the school was asked to improve teaching, including the way in which teachers target their teaching to make sure that pupils learn as quickly as possible and the way in which teaching assistants are used. You have ensured that teachers and teaching assistants have benefited from training, for example to improve mathematics teaching. Leaders and teachers have regular meetings where they discuss the progress of pupils so that those involved make sure that the challenge provided to pupils matches their needs. You are highly aware that, while pupils' rates of progress broadly match those seen in other schools, attainment in mathematics and, to some extent, other subjects has been lower. You have already taken steps to address this, for example through the introduction of new schemes of work and teaching approaches in mathematics and science. These are already helping teachers to speed up pupils' learning.

Inspectors also asked you to increase the precision of the school's improvement plan. You now ensure that the impact of the clear actions set out can be regularly measured against both short- and long-term criteria. Your monitoring plan supports this process and reflects the way that you are prepared to adjust actions to make sure that they are as successful as possible. Leadership has been strengthened since the previous inspection, for example in the early years. You acknowledge that further strengthening of subject leadership will help you to ensure that the changing approaches to teaching and learning have the biggest impact, including the way in which pupils are helped to use their skills across all subjects.

The parents and carers I talked with and those who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were generally very positive about the school. Almost all would recommend the school to others. They said that staff are friendly and approachable and they appreciate the way that the school uses emails and text messages to keep in touch with them. Pupils behave well. They were keen to talk to me about how they enjoy school and have confidence in their teachers.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have made sure that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils are systematic and thorough. Staff and governors receive regular training so that they are aware of their responsibilities and confident in carrying these out. The school's policies are based on those provided by the local safeguarding children's board. They include aspects such as how the school will respond to any concerns about allegations of abuse between pupils. When needed, leaders use effective contact with outside agencies to protect pupils. If leaders identify that such agencies are not doing the best job possible, they work with other schools to seek better communication or action.

The pupils I spoke with told me that they feel safe in school and parents agree. Pupils are taught how to be as safe as possible, for example when using the internet. Pupils' physical safety has been improved as a result of the recent building works. There are now more secure entrance arrangements and electronic locking on external doors.

Inspection findings

- Leaders are keen and dedicated. You have driven the significant, recent change in the school and are well supported by other senior leaders. You are realistic and honest in your evaluation of the school and are prepared to take appropriate action to make sure that weaker aspects improve. Where you identify that things could be further improved, you learn from actions already taken. Some of the more recent changes are still at a relatively early stage, for example the new approaches to teaching and learning in mathematics. You make sure that staff are deployed so that they can have the biggest impact. The school's decision to provide additional staffing so that the Year 6 class could be split into two smaller classes or have joint teaching as one class is helping those pupils to learn well.
- While senior leadership is well developed, the impact of middle leadership is still growing as middle leaders relatively new to the school become fully established.
- Governors understand the school well. You provide them with clear information and, in turn, they challenge and probe to make sure that the school is doing as good a job as possible.
- While broadly average, pupils' rates of progress have not been fast enough to ensure that pupils' attainment is as high as possible, particularly in mathematics. You have taken concerted action to address this, for example in training for staff and different approaches to mathematics learning. The new scheme of work for mathematics has raised expectations by ensuring that teachers provide more challenging work for pupils. Teachers now help pupils to gain deeper mathematical understanding, in addition to becoming proficient in completing calculations. Pupils use writing as they learn different subjects, but this is usually as a tool to record their work rather than as another opportunity to further develop their writing skills. Similarly, while pupils sometimes use mathematical ideas in science, these are not routinely capitalised upon.
- I saw samples of effective teaching and learning during the inspection. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together. Teaching assistants provide additional teaching to identified groups of pupils. This is sometimes to make sure that pupils do not fall behind and, at other times, to help them reach greater depth in their learning. Pupils told me that they enjoy learning. One aspect of this is how staff successfully use an electronic system of rewards to encourage pupils and to keep parents in touch with how well their children are doing.
- Leadership and teaching in the early years are effective. Children are captivated by the opportunities they have and so become engrossed in their play and learning and, in turn, develop their thinking. Around the time of the inspection, the topic for Reception children was based on dragons. Children's enthusiasm was such that I was asked three times whether I was a 'dragon slayer'. The school's assessment of children currently in Nursery and Reception indicates that they are progressing well across the different areas of learning focused on in the early years. As with other classes in the school, there is a well-thought-out system for challenging children to do their best and for encouraging learning.
- Governors, leaders and other staff have responded positively to the local need for more primary school places. While increasing the size of the school has brought

about additional challenges in terms of providing more space for an even broader range of pupils, it has allowed you to improve the school facilities and increase staffing. You have employed a Polish-speaking teacher and teaching assistant who provide additional support to Polish pupils and their families.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the recently introduced approaches to teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics and other subjects are embedded so that pupils' faster progress leads to more of them reaching the highest possible levels of attainment
- middle leadership is strengthened by further identifying subject leadership responsibilities
- the skills developed by pupils in different subjects are more fully used across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

David Selby
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you to discuss the school's effectiveness. I had discussions with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also met with a representative of the local authority. I met with a group of pupils and talked with others around the school, during lessons and at breaktime. I toured the school with you and visited the early years accompanied by the early years leader. I observed teaching and learning in classes across the school and heard a small group of pupils read. I scrutinised a sample of pupils' books together with you and another senior leader. I examined documents, including information about the safeguarding of pupils, the school's self-evaluation document, the improvement plan, minutes of a meeting of the governing body and information about pupils' achievement. I considered 41 responses completed this school year to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including six additional written responses. I spoke with some parents at the start of the school day. I reviewed four responses from members of staff to their online questionnaire.