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Mrs A Clinton
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Clinton

Short inspection of St Edmund's Roman Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 October 2017, 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 June 2013.

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 deputy headteacher have a strong understanding of your strengths and areas for development and take effective action to resolve any potential weaker aspect. As a result, pupils' outcomes have improved. Your comment that 'our children are our strength' is reflective of the Christian ethos at the heart of the school. You also have high aspirations for your pupils and as a result, pupils thrive both academically and in their personal development.

The diocese, governors and local authority have worked together to develop a very strong model of headship which has been successful in raising standards. Governors are very knowledgeable about the school's effectiveness because they ask challenging questions. Their evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is very accurate. Leaders and governors ensure that future development plans are well defined and that they focus on the correct priorities. They are proud of the wider opportunities available for pupils, such as learning to play a musical instrument. This allows pupils of all abilities to make good progress in music.

Parents are very positive about the school. The parents I spoke with and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are proud of the school and they say that their children 'excel academically'. Your pupils are a credit to the school as they consistently display good manners, are polite and are keen to speak to visitors about their learning. Pupils have a strong understanding of the school's

values and take pride in both their work and being a member of the school community. One comment included, 'Mrs Clinton is the main reason the school is like it is, the best it can be.' There was clear evidence of pupils putting these values into practice in lessons and around the school.

At your last inspection, an area for improvement was to improve standards in writing by exploiting every opportunity to develop written skills throughout the curriculum. This has been dealt with very effectively. Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and learning in writing across the school. You have meticulously followed up on any identified concerns, such as by providing quality ongoing training for staff where needed. As a result, the teaching of writing has improved. Your curriculum allows more opportunities for pupils to write across a range of subjects, further improving their writing skills. As a result, pupils' outcomes in writing have improved significantly at every key stage. This has led to the school's most recent results being very positive, particularly in key stage 2.

During the inspection, we discussed the next steps for the school to improve further. You accept that assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics should be extended to track pupils' progress more rigorously. We also agreed that teachers' questioning in some year groups should be improved.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements across the school, including in early years, are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. You know your families well and work effectively to ensure that the most vulnerable families and pupils are safe. Your staff receive regular training on how to spot the signs and symptoms of abuse. You have undertaken additional safeguarding training. This ensures that you keep abreast of the most recent changes to safeguarding practice and share this knowledge with staff. You have developed an effective safeguarding team within the school.

You provide many opportunities for pupils to learn about staying safe online. Parents are also provided with useful information about how to ensure that their children are safe when using technology. You are leading the way by helping pupils to understand the dangers of technology that provides information about their location when online. Regular visitors, such as police and the fire brigade, give talks to pupils around a range of issues such as personal safety and firework safety. Pupils say that they are taught how to stay safe by teachers and in school assemblies.

Inspection findings

- We agreed a number of key issues that this inspection would focus on. The first of these was how leaders are improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. You undertook an external review of the use of the pupil premium grant to identify the effectiveness of this spending. Leaders now have a clear understanding of the barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils face. At the end of key stage 1 in 2017, there was an increase in the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who

achieved the standard expected for their age in reading and writing. There was also a significant increase in the number of disadvantaged pupils achieving greater depth in reading. Your own assessment information and the well-matched work in pupils' books across a range of subjects shows the strong progress that disadvantaged pupils make. There has also been a sharp focus on the most able disadvantaged pupils that has led to an improvement in outcomes for this group of pupils, especially in writing. Outcomes for disadvantaged children in the early years also showed significant improvement in 2017. A greater proportion of disadvantaged pupils also make better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics across key stage 2.

- Another key issue we agreed to consider was how leaders have improved outcomes for pupils across the wider curriculum, particularly in science. In 2016, pupils' outcomes in science were below the national average. There have been significant improvements in this subject because of the effective actions of the subject leader. Well-matched work in pupils' science books and your assessment information shows an improvement in outcomes for current pupils in every year group. The curriculum is now regularly monitored and work in topic books shows strong progress and the development of key skills across the curriculum. Pupils' outcomes in music are a strength, with all pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 learning a musical instrument. This strength is celebrated, with some pupils representing the school at national concerts. Pupils say how much they enjoy their learning in all subjects and they respond well to the ways teachers make learning lively and engaging for them. Subject leaders have completed training and take an active role in the monitoring of standards. The overall curriculum is carefully monitored so that pupils acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding needed as they move through the school. We did agree that although plans are in place to extend assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics, this needs further development.
- Another key issue that we agreed to look at was the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In 2016, the attendance of this group of pupils was a concern. Pupils' regular attendance is a high priority for you. You and the special educational needs coordinator work closely with the attendance officer to support the most vulnerable families. Leaders follow up pupil absences and hold parents to account. Regular meetings and welfare initiatives, such as employing a social worker, have also had an impact on removing barriers to good attendance. Effective monitoring of pupil absence has led to issues being dealt with effectively. Leaders also focus on punctuality, which has improved for this group of pupils. You are raising expectations and, as a result, the rate of attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has increased. This is also having a direct impact on improving their progress and attainment.
- In our observations of teaching we noted particular strength in teachers' use of questioning to develop pupils' understanding. However, the use of high-quality questioning was not evident in all year groups. We agreed that the strong practice observed in some classes should be shared with all staff to extend, challenge and deepen the learning of all pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- extend assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics to track pupils' progress
- share the high-quality questioning evident in some year groups to extend, challenge and deepen the learning of all pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Hunter
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Throughout the inspection I spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and school life. I met with you, your deputy headteacher, your special educational needs coordinator and curriculum leaders to discuss improvements in their areas of responsibility. I looked at learning in pupils' books. I spoke to the local authority improvement partner and a representative from the Diocese of Salford.

I reviewed documentation which included your evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the school development plan. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day and considered nine responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

I visited classes, along with you and your deputy headteacher, to observe pupils' learning. I met with governors to discuss aspects of school leadership and management. I reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff. I also completed a review of the school's website.