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Mrs Sinead Colbeck
Headteacher
St Augustine of Canterbury Roman Catholic Primary School
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Lancashire
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Dear Mrs Colbeck

Short inspection of St Augustine of Canterbury Roman Catholic Primary School, Burnley

Following my visit to the school on 23 January 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 January 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

You, alongside a committed staff, have created a warm and friendly school where the well-being of pupils is at the heart of everything that you do. You lead by example to ensure that staff place no limits on what pupils can achieve. The school's strong Christian ethos underpins a commendable level of pastoral care. Together, you have created a haven for pupils where they can flourish. Pupils say that they feel safe and happy. Parents and carers consider staff to be welcoming and approachable. The parents with whom I spoke explained how staff go 'the extra mile' to get the best from all pupils.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel well supported by leaders and governors and they are keen to excel professionally. Governors are committed to ensuring that leaders provide a nurturing environment where pupils thrive. Members of the governing body have responsibilities for holding leaders to account for individual subjects within the school. As a result, they have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use this effectively to ask pertinent and challenging questions of leaders. This ensures that the school is going from strength to strength.

You have an accurate and balanced view of the school. Since the last inspection, you have worked to address the areas identified by the inspection team. You take a

more rigorous approach to the way in which you monitor teaching. Leaders have an informed view. This is allowing them to improve further the quality of teaching. The focus on checking that pupils understand what is expected of them has been successful. Teachers now check pupils' understanding during lessons as a matter of routine. When needed, teachers reshape their explanations to help pupils to progress in their learning. The pupils with whom I spoke explained that, when they are finding tasks difficult, teachers change their approach in order to help them learn. As a result, teaching is effective and pupils make good progress.

You have also improved the role of subject leaders. They are now actively involved in the monitoring of teaching. This is improving the quality of teaching in specific subjects. For example, in mathematics, some teachers are beginning to give more attention to developing pupils' reasoning skills. That said, you acknowledge that, in mathematics, even more attention is needed to challenge pupils further and develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills. You and your leadership team know the current areas for improvement for the school. These include aspects of mathematics, attendance and extending pupils' skills in reading for understanding.

Since the previous inspection, you have also improved the work of teaching assistants. Following training and the opportunity to share strong practice, they have a clearer understanding of their role in the classroom. This means that they are more effective in the way they support pupils with their learning. For example, they modify their questions to deepen pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils now make better progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding policies and procedures meet requirements. The system for ensuring that all adults are suitable to work with children and pupils is robust. Staff and governors receive regular training and this is up to date. Staff are aware of safeguarding procedures and they refer concerns to leaders. Your safeguarding records are meticulous and your work with external agencies to safeguard pupils is exemplary.

You and your staff have a clear understanding of the safeguarding risks that are potentially more prevalent in the local area. You reduce these risks by creating a culture where staff are extremely vigilant. You also work with families to develop positive and supportive relationships. You know that pupils are safe in school. As a result, you are fully committed to ensuring that pupils attend school as much as possible. Pupils, parents and staff are confident that the school's safeguarding arrangements keep pupils safe at school.

Inspection findings

- A key focus of the inspection was to consider whether you are improving attendance. You have worked with tenacity to improve attendance. You have put a number of strategies in place and these are having a positive effect. The importance of good attendance has a high profile across the school. You continue

to work with parents to support them to improve further their children's attendance. The majority of pupils are rarely absent from school. However, there are still some families who struggle to get their children to school every day. Leaders acknowledge the need to further improve attendance, particularly the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

- Leaders and governors acknowledge that the progress made by pupils in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 was not good enough. Following a decline in pupils' outcomes at key stage 2, you have responded swiftly and effectively. Leaders have made a number of changes, including some considerable changes to staffing.
- You have improved the monitoring of pupils' progress and put extra support in place where it is needed. Teachers' analysis of pupils' understanding identifies gaps in their knowledge. This information is used to plan work that matches pupils' needs and extends their learning. A review of pupils' books shows that actions are reaping rewards, with strong evidence of pupils' good progress. Despite this improvement, you are aware that, at times in mathematics, activities are still not challenging enough to develop pupils' understanding and problem-solving skills.
- The final focus for this inspection was on reading in key stage 2. Typically, the proportion of pupils who pass the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 is well above the national average. Similarly, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading at key stage 1 is above the national average. However, in 2017, pupils' progress in reading at the end of key stage 2 declined. Leaders have taken swift action to address this. Current pupils make good progress in reading. Nonetheless, leaders recognise that pupils' comprehension skills are not as well developed as they could be.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they further improve attendance, particularly the attendance of disadvantaged pupils
- they provide even more challenging activities in mathematics to develop further pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills
- they develop pupils' comprehension skills in reading.

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

Emma Gregory
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders, a group of subject leaders and some members of the governing body. I also met with a group of parents, spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day and met formally with a group of pupils. I met with the school improvement partner and spoke with a representative from the Diocese of Salford. Leaders accompanied me on visits to classes, where I observed teaching and learning in a range of subjects. I looked at work produced by pupils in mathematics and reading. I listened to some key stage 1 and 2 pupils read. I examined a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding and the school's improvement plan. I also looked at the school's website. I considered 21 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 142 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. I also took into account the 26 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 24 responses to Ofsted's free-text facility.