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Mrs Hind  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Hind

### **Short inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 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 March 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. St Patrick's Catholic Primary School is a happy and welcoming school where pupils are taught well. Your pupils develop as confident and polite children. This is because of your high expectations for pupils, which are shared by staff and governors. You have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because of your detailed monitoring. Leaders visit classrooms frequently, carefully scrutinise pupils' work and track pupils' progress. As a result, leaders can see the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. You use these findings well to help staff improve their practice through well-planned training. Consequently, pupils achieve well.

Governors know the school well and hold leaders to account. Governors use their professional skills and detailed knowledge of the school to ask challenging questions. At the start of my inspection, the information published on the school's website, including safeguarding procedures, did not meet requirements. The vast majority of the lapses were administrative and the information was held in school. For example, leaders uploaded an up-to-date safeguarding policy by the end of the inspection. Governors acknowledge that they have not routinely checked that the website meets requirements. They are currently taking actions to enhance the information that the website provides.

Pupils enjoy coming to school because it offers an interesting place to learn. Those pupils who spoke to me during the inspection say that they feel safe and teachers

and other adults are helpful and caring. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities that they have to take part in after-school clubs, such as fencing, cooking and dance. They relish the trips that you provide, such as to the Lake District and to a local farm. A local artist is a frequent visitor and pupils' attractive paintings and drawings enhance the school.

Parents and carers share the pupils' positive view of the school. Those who spoke with me at the start of the day or who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, said the school is very nurturing. You have developed close links with the families that you serve, including those from Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller heritage. You and your staff are held in high regard. Parents were keen to share how inclusive the school is and how staff went the extra mile to help pupils and their families. Parents' comments were typified by repeated reference to the school as a 'family' and descriptions of staff as 'approachable, caring and supportive'.

Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved. You have addressed most of the areas for improvement identified by previous inspectors. Pupils' achievement in grammar, punctuation and spelling is good. They leave the school with standards in line with pupils nationally. Leaders have also addressed issues with pupils' handwriting. Pupils learn to form their letters correctly and now write with more fluency. They take pride in their well-presented work.

Previous inspectors also asked you to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in computing. Since then, leaders have put in place an effective programme of training for staff. Teachers now feel more confident to teach computing skills effectively. Governors and leaders have ensured that computers are available in every classroom. As a result of changes, pupils' computing skills are improving.

Leaders have taken decisive steps to ensure that feedback given to teachers on the quality of their work is accurate and detailed, as requested by previous inspectors. Staff know their strengths and exactly what they need to do to improve. Teachers feel supported and have grown in confidence. You lead a reflective and harmonious staff, where teachers work together to share their expertise and develop their skills. Consequently, the quality of teaching continues to improve.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your staff place a high priority on keeping pupils safe. Robust checks are carried out on the suitability of staff to work with children. Comprehensive training ensures that staff implement the school's policies relating to safeguarding. Record-keeping is detailed and fit for purpose. Staff share information with parents and the appropriate authorities effectively to ensure pupils' safety. You and your staff work well with other agencies such as health services and the local authority.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is filled with opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. Parents and staff agree that pupils are safe and cared for well.

### **Inspection findings**

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry, the first of which related to attendance. Previous inspectors asked you to continue to develop strong links with the communities the school serves so as to raise attendance and participation in school life. Pupils from all groups in school participate fully in school life, attending trips and enjoying after-school clubs. They enjoy coming to school but attendance rates are lower than the national average. This is particularly the case for the substantial number of pupils from Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller heritage. You provided me with evidence which confirms that leaders take decisive actions to improve attendance. You were able to demonstrate that as a result of your actions, attendance levels are rising. For some pupils, time in school has increased significantly, leading to rapid progress in their learning. Raising attendance rates continues to be a high priority for leaders.
- My second key line of enquiry related to the achievement of children in the Reception Year. This was because children's attainment fell significantly in 2016. You have changed the leadership of the early years and the deployment of staff. Children now achieve well. Last year, children started in the Reception class with skills and development below those typical for children of this age. By the end of the year, their attainment was in line with the national average and children had made good progress. During the inspection, children were observed developing their reading, writing and counting skills. Workbooks show that children quickly improve their early writing.
- My next key line of enquiry related to the progress key stage 1 pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make in reading. You demonstrated that in school you have raised the importance of reading. Pupils enjoy reading and it is well taught. Leaders quickly intervene to make sure that pupils falling behind in reading are quickly brought back on track. As a result of recent changes, pupils develop their skills in reading. The progress of current key stage 1 pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, in reading is good.
- My final key line of enquiry related to the achievement of the most able key stage 2 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' work indicates that the curriculum has a good impact on the most able pupils in English. However, we agreed that in mathematics, pupils, including the most able, do not have enough opportunity to develop their understanding through problem-solving and challenge.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a higher proportion of the most able pupils achieves greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics
- they build upon the effective actions already taken to improve the attendance of pupils
- in mathematics, pupils are given more opportunities to develop their skills through problem-solving and challenge
- the website is compliant and is regularly monitored to ensure that it remains so.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Lancaster, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Stevens  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and four teachers. I also met with four governors. I met with a representative of the local authority. I met with eight pupils from key stages 1 and 2 and spoke informally with other pupils during lessons. I visited all classes with you where I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils. I also heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read.

I took account of 20 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including 15 free-text responses. I read four written submissions from parents. I also spoke with six parents before school. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, pupils' behaviour logs and staff monitoring files. I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep pupils safe, staff training records, safeguarding checks and attendance information. I undertook a review of the school's website.