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Mr Michael Manton  
Headteacher  
St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Morecambe  
Coniston Road  
Morecambe  
Lancashire  
LA4 5PS

Dear Mr Manton

### **Short inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Morecambe**

Following my visit to the school on 17 April 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. St Mary's is a calm, welcoming and inclusive school with strong Christian values. You teach pupils to follow the school's motto, 'Called to make a difference'. Through charitable acts, such as Mini Vinnies' work in the community and parish, pupils learn to behave well and to treat all with respect. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm and pride about singing for the elderly and supporting local charities.

The appointment of the deputy headteacher has strengthened the leadership of the school. Leaders check how pupils are learning on a regular basis and use the information to further improve standards. You have shown a determination to provide staff with well-planned training and support to improve their teaching. Staff appreciate the opportunities they have to work together and share good practice. Your enthusiastic subject leaders keep their skills up to date and work well to support their colleagues. They keep a regular check on learning across the curriculum.

Teachers share your determination to provide a wide variety of opportunities and experiences to develop pupils' skills and resilience. Through initiatives such as 'I'm a scientist' and 'I'm an engineer' with STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) ambassadors, you widen pupils' horizons and aspirations.

Governors provide the right balance of support and challenge for leaders. They know the school well and have an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas

for development. Governors keep a close watch on pupils' progress to ensure that learning continues to improve. At the time of this inspection, the information published on the school's website, including curriculum information, did not meet requirements. Governors are taking the appropriate steps to make sure the school's website is up to date.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and are proud to be part of St Mary's school family. In class, pupils behave well and are keen to learn. Those pupils who spoke to me during the inspection said they enjoy the varied and interesting curriculum. They relish the many trips and visits, and spoke with enthusiasm about kayaking, climbing and ghyll scrambling. You teach pupils to value differences. Pupils told me they enjoy learning about other faiths, such as Judaism, Islam and Buddhism.

Parents and carers share pupils' positive view of the school. Those who spoke with me at the start of the school day or who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said they value how closely staff work with parents. Their views were typified by a comment that the school is 'warm, welcoming and friendly'. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities were keen to tell me how pleased they were with the support their children receive.

You have responded well to the areas for improvement identified by the previous inspection. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved. Leaders use assessment data to monitor learning accurately. You make sure that teachers give pupils work which matches their abilities. As a result of improvements to the teaching of reading and writing, pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points to leave school with standards in line with national expectations. However, there are still some inconsistencies in pupils' progress in writing across the school. In some classes, pupils do not develop their writing skills in subjects such as history, geography and science.

Since the previous inspection, you have taken the right steps to improve pupils' attendance. You keep a careful check on absences and work closely with parents to make sure pupils arrive at school on time and attend very regularly. As a result of changes that you have made, attendance of pupils has risen.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors have made sure that safeguarding arrangements are thorough, fit for purpose and of high quality. They carry out statutory checks on the suitability of staff to work with children. Leaders have taken effective actions to ensure that the school is a safe and secure place in which children can learn. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, including online. The page of your website, 'Keeping children safe', provides useful information for parents, including how to keep children safe online.

Though regular training, staff and governors have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding. They are vigilant about the potential risks pupils may face. Records

relating to pupils' welfare are appropriate and well kept. Leaders work closely with parents and other professionals to make sure that pupils are safe.

## **Inspection findings**

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry, the first of which related to the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This was because, in 2017, some of these pupils made less than expected progress. Staff work closely with other professionals and parents to accurately identify pupils' barriers to learning. Staff provide well-planned support in lessons. Since the previous inspection, the proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities in the school has risen. Some of these pupils have complex needs. You lead a very inclusive school and would like these pupils to make better progress. Staff are working with other settings and professionals to further develop the provision in school.
- For my second key line of enquiry, I looked at pupils' achievement in English and mathematics in key stage 1. This was because, in 2016 and 2017, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. I found that leaders have taken the correct actions to improve the progress pupils make in Year 1 and Year 2. Staff have attended training to improve their skills and you have taken steps to ensure that teaching matches pupils' abilities. As a result of the actions you have taken, pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics has risen. Leaders are keeping a close check on pupils' progress to make sure that improvements are sustained.
- During the inspection, I found that children learn well in the Reception Year. The classroom is bright and attractive and staff plan engaging activities which match children's interests. Children play with concentration and cooperation. During my visit, children in the role play area were playing with great enthusiasm dressed as pirates. Others were very carefully drawing pirate treasure maps. Children make good progress in different areas of learning and are well prepared for Year 1.
- My final key line of enquiry related to whether pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum. I found that you give pupils a wide range of enjoyable opportunities and experiences to develop their learning. You use the local environment very regularly to bring learning to life in subjects such as geography, history and English. For example, a Year 3 local area study included mud dipping at the beach. Pupils value visits to museums, such as a Year 6 history trip to Manchester Museum. You develop pupils' skills and confidence across the curriculum. In five classes, pupils learn a musical instrument and they regularly perform to audiences. Pupils told me how much they enjoy sport, such as athletics, netball and football. Pupils are encouraged to be reflective and questioning. For example, during a recent history topic on the Second World War, pupils considered whether it is right to go to war. You provide pupils with a rich curriculum which develops their skills and understanding in different subject areas. As a result, pupils make good progress and are well prepared for their next stage of education.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the website is compliant and effectively monitored to make sure that it remains so
- pupils are given more opportunities to develop their writing skills in subjects such as geography, history and science
- recent improvements in the teaching of mathematics and English in key stage 1 are embedded so more pupils reach the expected standard at the end of Year 2
- provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities improves further so pupils make the progress of which they are capable.

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 and a group of teachers, including middle leaders. I also met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with a representative of the local authority. I met with eight pupils from key stage 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 13 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including free-text responses. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan, information about pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour logs and teachers' performance management arrangements. I also evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep pupils safe, safeguarding checks and attendance information. I undertook a review of the school's website.