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Mrs Deborah Rainer
Interim Headteacher
St Anthony's Catholic Primary and Nursery School
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Dear Mrs Rainer

Short inspection of St Anthony's Catholic Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 19 March 2019 with Graham Marshall, Ofsted Inspector, 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in February 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since you became the interim headteacher in September 2017, you have retained a strong focus on ensuring that St Anthony's is a happy school in which pupils thrive. As a result, pupils enjoy school and are proud of their achievements. Pupils say that learning is fun. This view was summed up by one pupil who said: 'Learning is fun because every day can be a surprise!'

St Anthony's is a very welcoming school. Parents and carers are supportive of your work and speak highly of the 'community feel' of the school and the approachable staff. Several pupils who arrived at the school unable to speak English told me how well pupils and staff helped them to learn the language quickly. Pupils are wonderful ambassadors for the school. It was a delight to talk to such polite and thoughtful pupils. In lessons and around the school, pupils behave well. They listen attentively to each other and their teachers. They respond well to teachers' high expectations. Pupils in Year 6 told me that they feel very well prepared for secondary school.

The inspection did not evaluate the progress the school has made since the last inspection, as the areas identified for improvement related to the predecessor school. However, we discussed your work to raise standards further in mathematics. You explained how you have improved pupils' geometry and arithmetic skills. You have provided further training for staff and made sure that pupils who need

additional help receive it. You are particularly pleased with the success of the workshops designed to give parents a better understanding of mathematics in Year 6. Several parents told inspectors how useful they found these. You also described the work you have done to improve leaders' checking of pupils' achievement. This now gives you useful information about how well different groups of pupils are learning. However, there is more to do to make sure that you check the impact of your actions so that you can focus your support even more sharply.

You are rightly proud of the quality and breadth of the curriculum. Pupils especially enjoy the music and sporting opportunities that you provide. Pupils benefit from the wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs that they all attend. Pupils told me that they particularly enjoy running their own clubs. Pupils develop their self-confidence and self-esteem through the myriad of opportunities that they have to help others around the school. For example, older pupils help the younger ones during playtimes and at lunchtime and take on responsibilities as school councillors and librarians.

Governance of the school is strong, with clear lines of responsibility and accountability between the trust and the local academy committee of the school. All those responsible for governance are ambitious for the school and have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's performance. They have secured a substantive headship of the school for September.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You provide ongoing training for staff, so that everyone knows what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Safeguarding is discussed at every senior leader meeting, and reminders are given to staff during weekly staff meetings. You work closely with the local authority to make sure concerns are taken seriously.

Pupils say that they feel safe at the school. All parents spoken with during the inspection or who responded to Ofsted's online survey agree that their child is safe in the school. All staff agree. There is a palpable sense of care throughout the school, which contributes strongly to a culture of safeguarding in the school.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's work, including: the effectiveness of safeguarding; the achievement of disadvantaged pupils; how well teaching in key stage 2 supports pupils' strong progress in reading; and how well teaching in the early years prepares children for Year 1.
- The newly appointed deputy headteacher has made a very strong start in her role as leader of the provision for pupils who are disadvantaged. She has made sure she knows each of the pupils well. She has a good understanding of any barriers that they have to their learning. This clear knowledge about individual needs is used well to make sure that funding is targeted precisely. Pupils' books

show that most disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making good, and often strong, progress in their learning.

- Leaders have put in place a raft of strategies designed to improve the teaching of reading. Displays around the school promote reading as being enjoyable and important. A focus on increasing the amount of reading that pupils do, both at home and at the school, is paying dividends. Pupils told inspectors that they were encouraged to read by competing for 'book-worm' rewards. They speak confidently about the books that they enjoy, both for pleasure and information.
- Leaders recognise the important role of parents in supporting pupils' reading. A 'reading pathway' gives parents helpful information about the expected skills and knowledge that pupils should have in each year group. The school also provides useful reading recommendations for pupils and 'free little libraries' from which adults can borrow books.
- It is evident that much has been done to improve the teaching of reading, for example additional training for staff, a review of texts and participation in a national reading project. However, leaders have not yet fully evaluated the impact of their work.
- Children play and learn happily in the early years. There are strong relationships between adults and children that help to ensure that children grow in confidence and feel safe. Children who are new to learning English are well supported, both by adults and other children.
- Teachers ensure that there is a range of learning activities, both inside and outside. However, these do not provide consistently the challenge needed for children to learn as quickly as they should. In 2018, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development at the end of Reception was significantly below the national average. Although improving the quality of teaching in the early years is a priority in the school's improvement plan, there is more to be done to make sure that this aspect of the school's work is as strong as other areas.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching in the early years continues to improve, so that more children reach a good level of development by the end of Reception
- the impact of actions taken to raise standards is more precisely reviewed, so that leaders know whether or not their actions are effective.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of

Northampton, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Slough. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Toulson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors spent most of the day working with you or your senior leaders to discuss your views of the school, to visit classrooms, to talk to pupils and to look at their work. Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and also sought their views of school life. We took account of the 21 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. We spoke to several parents at the start of the school day and took account of the 14 responses to the online parents' survey Parent View and the 12 free-text comments. An inspector met with your designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and you as deputy DSL. I met with representatives of the local academy committee, the chief executive officer of the trust and the local authority representative and had a telephone conversation with the director of education of the diocese. Inspectors looked at the school's website, a range of documentation relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, and the school's evaluation of its effectiveness.