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Mrs Yvette Sullivan  
Headteacher  
St Paul's CofE Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Sullivan

### **Short inspection of St Paul's CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 5 December 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 September 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There is a calm and purposeful learning atmosphere in your school. You have a strong vision which is shared by staff and governors. Parents say that pupils are happy and this view is shared by the pupils. Pupils confirm that they are happy at this school and have good relationships with the staff. Older pupils have responsibilities, for example they play games with the younger children at lunchtimes. They take pride in helping support the younger children. The behaviour of the pupils is a strength of the school. Pupils are polite, well mannered and friendly.

You and your staff are passionate for this school to be the best school it can be. You meet regularly with class teachers to review pupils' progress. As a result, you have an accurate view of those pupils who are not making good progress and you use resources well to plan additional support to help them catch up. You regularly check the quality of teaching, ensuring that teachers have opportunities to share good practice and learn from each other.

The governing body is supportive of the school. One governor said, 'Every child matters in our school.' Governors are well informed. You provide them with information about what the school does well and where it needs further improvement. However, we did discuss how leaders and governors should evaluate your school effectiveness more accurately by comparing your performance more

closely with national benchmarks. Governors visit the school regularly and are knowledgeable about the monitoring activities that take place and are beginning to develop their skills in asking challenging questions.

At the previous inspection, inspectors asked leaders to raise pupils' attainment in writing to the higher level seen in mathematics and reading. Since taking up post, you have made sure that standards in writing are high and that the quality and standard of writing is consistent across the curriculum. In the lessons that you and I visited, we found that work in pupils' books is of a high standard. Pupils take pride in their learning. Attainment in writing has been high for the previous two years in key stage 1 and key stage 2 when compared to the national averages. Punctuation is used to a high standard across all of the pupils' books. The quality of the presentation of work in pupils' books is good.

You work closely with partners from the Diocese of Manchester, Salford local authority and St Andrew's teaching school alliance, and your contributions are much valued. This work enables new teachers to learn from your experienced staff. This means that the expectations for pupils' achievement and progress in your school are high.

A further area of improvement from the previous inspection was for the school to extend the monitoring roles of newly established leaders. Since you have been in post, there has been a significant turnover in staff and the roles of leaders have changed many times. New leaders are supported with a mentor and they are a key component of the school's monitoring and evaluation cycle.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders make sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Safeguarding records are clear and accurate. All checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils are robust. The curriculum and the school's website provide information in relation to staying safe. Staff and leaders have regular training and members of the governing body have been trained specifically in safer recruitment.

Safeguarding referrals are made in a timely manner and are followed up diligently. Leaders work with other agencies and parents, ensuring that support is provided where necessary. All of the pupils spoken with during the inspection felt safe. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, feel that their children are safe, well cared for and well behaved.

### **Inspection findings**

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry, the first of which was related to how reading is taught. Reading progress has been low for the previous two years for pupils leaving Year 6. You are addressing this issue proactively. A new system for the teaching of reading has been implemented across the school to ensure improved outcomes. Pupils enjoy talking about books and taking part in a range of reading activities. Pupils whom I heard read, while in classrooms, read with fluency and confidence. Through this new approach to

reading you aim to ensure that all groups of pupils meet age-related expectations. Governors recognise that progress in reading needs to improve, especially for the most able pupils in key stage 2. Pupils spoken with during the inspection are aware of how the new systems help them to develop as readers.

- The second focus of the inspection related to the quality of writing in key stage 2. You explained to me why the school has no published data for writing for 2016/2017. This was due to a technicality. However, the in-house data for 2017 showed that writing attainment was better than the provisional national average. You and I looked at a wide range of books in all the classes we visited. The quality of writing is strong, not only in English books, but across all of the books that we looked at during the inspection. Wide-ranging, challenging tasks enable pupils to write effectively across the curriculum for a range of purposes. The quality of writing seen was well presented and pupils take pride in their work.
- During the inspection I also focused on the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. You and your staff know these pupils well and have robust systems in place for monitoring their attendance. Those pupils whose attendance is persistently low are tracked carefully. You meet regularly with parents in relation to attendance and you issue fines in accordance with the guidance you have received from Salford local authority. Rates of attendance for disadvantaged pupils have been low for the previous two years. However, rates of attendance for current disadvantaged pupils are significantly higher than this time last year for the same group, which shows that your actions are clearly having an impact
- Attainment and progress is strong in key stage 1. During the inspection, you and I looked at the quality of the learning taking place. We observed that all pupils are actively engaged in their learning. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support different groups of pupils. The tasks that pupils work on are well matched to their abilities. As a result, pupils in key stage 1 continue to make good progress.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- their view of the school's performance is measured more sharply against national benchmarks
- they embed the recent changes to the teaching of reading to ensure that pupils, especially the most able, make stronger progress in key stage 2
- governors routinely ask leaders challenging questions about pupils' progress.

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

Yours sincerely

John Donald  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher. I also met with six members of the governing body including the vice-chair. I met with a representative of Salford local authority. I spoke informally with pupils during lunchtime. You and I visited all classes, where we observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils. I spoke with parents as they brought their children to school. I took account of 30 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including 22 free-text responses. I also considered the responses of 19 staff to Ofsted's online questionnaire. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' attainment and progress. I also evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep children safe, safeguarding checks and attendance information. I undertook a review of the school's website.