

28 March 2018

Mrs Evelyn Murphy
Headteacher
St Peters CofE Primary School
Old Church Road
Harborne
Birmingham
West Midlands
B17 0BE

Dear Mrs Murphy

Short inspection of St Peters CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 March 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 December 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

You provide strong and effective leadership and are extremely well supported by the two deputy headteachers. This results in a united approach to ensuring that pupils develop as well-rounded individuals who are able to succeed in all areas of school life. You use your detailed knowledge of pupils to help them feel valued and respected. The comment from a pupil that, 'We are treated as being unique and we support each other', reflected the positive attitudes that pupils have about the school.

There is a strong sense of community in the school and this is valued by pupils, parents and carers alike. You have established a range of strategies to make sure that pupils from the two parts of the split site are able to interact and work together, including through regular worship opportunities at St Peter's Church. Pupils from the very wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds that make up the school's population interact and cooperate extremely well. The school's core Christian values, including 'forgiveness towards others in order to enable us to move forwards', are understood, adhered to and exemplified through the attitudes and behaviours of pupils and staff alike. Relationships between pupils and members of staff are positive and supportive. While teaching assistants provide valuable support to pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, you recognise that there is still not a fully consistent

approach to how these members of staff are deployed to have the greatest impact on all pupils' learning.

You have further improved teaching in the school, which was an area for development from the previous inspection. Pupils have been provided with good opportunities to become independent learners. You have been successful in increasing the proportion of the older pupils who are working at the higher standards in reading and mathematics by the time they leave the school in Year 6. However, there is still further work to be done to ensure that more Year 2 pupils are working at greater depth. While there are strong systems in place for tracking pupils' progress and attainment you recognise that teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in writing may not over time have been fully accurate.

Pupils are well behaved, caring and considerate. Pupils value the opportunities that they are provided with to take on responsibility, including through participation as members of the 'ethos squad' or as representatives on the school council. Pupils that I spoke to during the inspection proudly told me about how their efforts had helped to extend playtime opportunities, through the installation of a climbing wall and playground markings for games such as hopscotch.

You have developed a broad and balanced curriculum. This helps pupils to have good opportunities to extend their learning across all subjects. The well-planned topics, such as 'Mighty Metals' and 'A Child's War', allow pupils to make secure links between subjects and are enhanced through a wide range of trips and visits.

Governors have a clear and detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas where it can improve further. Governors are keen to identify how additional strategies can be implemented to further improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. They use a wide range of monitoring activities effectively to inform their decisions and provide strong support and challenge to you and other leaders.

The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire would recommend the school. Parents commented on how their children feel safe and supported in school and appreciate the range of extra-curricular activities that are available to them.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a clear culture of safeguarding that is promoted strongly by school leaders. Joint leadership of safeguarding by the deputy headteachers helps to ensure that pupils on the two separate school sites receive the same degree of support and attention. The sharing of information between these leaders is managed extremely well. Highly effective systems are firmly established for ensuring that pupils' safety and well-being are central to the work of the school. Leaders are tenacious in ensuring that outside agencies fulfil their responsibilities in supporting vulnerable and at-risk pupils.

Systems for identifying, recording and reporting any concerns relating to pupils' safety and well-being are strong, well-established and understood by all staff. Training for staff is matched well to the particular needs of individuals. Pupils develop a good understanding of how they can keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.

Inspection findings

- Pupils make particularly strong progress in reading and mathematics as they move through the school and reach standards of attainment that are well above the national average by the time they leave in Year 6. However, in the past two years, Year 6 pupils' progress in writing has been below the national average.
- Leaders have taken a range of appropriate actions to address the lower outcomes in writing. Pupils now have far greater opportunities to write independently and at length, both within English lessons and across other subject areas, such as history, geography and science. All pupils in school take part in exciting and well-planned thematic weeks, such as on the environment. These provide pupils with meaningful opportunities to write for a purpose and to apply their well-developed skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Evidence seen during the inspection, including from scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's own assessment information, shows that standards of writing are now good and pupils are making stronger progress.
- Leaders have identified that teachers' assessments of pupils' writing have not been consistently accurate in the past. They have increased opportunities for teachers to compare their assessments with staff at other schools and have provided training to develop staff's skills in this area. However, leaders are aware that there is still further work to be undertaken to ensure that all assessment practice is fully secure and accurate.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and are skilled in ensuring that they make clear what each pupil is expected to achieve in each lesson. Pupils understand how their individual improvement targets are beneficial in helping them to know what their next steps in learning are. They respond well to teachers' instructions, settle quickly and diligently to the tasks they are set, and take great pride in their work. Standards of presentation are high across all year groups.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards of attainment in reading and mathematics was well above the national average for Year 6 pupils in 2017. However, in both 2016 and 2017 the proportion of pupils working at greater depth in key stage 1 was below the national average in all subjects. Leaders identified this as one of the key areas for improvement in this academic year. They have provided training and support for staff on how they can set tasks that are suitably demanding for the most able pupils. Evidence of the successful impact of this was seen during the inspection. For example, a group of the most able pupils in Year 6 were set a challenging activity that motivated them to write high-quality pieces of work about a character from the Philip Pullman book 'Clockwork or All Wound Up'.

- Leaders have this year provided training for teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that additional support in classrooms is used effectively for all pupils. While this is having a positive impact, teaching assistants are still not consistently deployed as effectively as they could be to promote pupils' learning.
- The pupil premium funding is used well by leaders. They have provided additional support for disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 to help them gain a secure understanding of phonics. This has been successful and, as a result, the proportion of pupils who are at the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is well above the national average.
- Leaders have ensured that the emotional and social needs of disadvantaged pupils are very well supported. Funding is used to employ a trained counsellor who works with a small number of individual pupils each week. This has been successful in ensuring that these pupils develop a positive attitude to all aspects of school life and are able to engage fully and successfully in their learning.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of the barriers to learning for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, they have not undertaken a detailed analysis of the needs of all disadvantaged pupils and are aware that this will be beneficial in ensuring that all of these pupils can make strong and sustained progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers are fully secure and accurate in assessing pupils' written work and use the outcomes of the assessments to match work accurately to pupils' abilities, especially for the most able pupils
- teachers ensure that teaching assistants are consistently used effectively to support pupils in their learning
- further work is undertaken to accurately identify the specific barriers to learning of all disadvantaged pupils and provide additional interventions and support where needed.

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

Yours sincerely

Adam Hewett
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the two deputy headteachers and a middle leader. I met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body. I considered the 89 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and reviewed the 55 free-text comments from parents. Together with you and the deputy headteachers, I visited eight lessons to observe learning. I spoke with pupils in lessons and at lunchtime and observed their behaviour at lunchtime on the playground.

I scrutinised information about pupils' progress during the last academic year. I considered other documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and the school improvement plan. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures, including policies and checks on staff employed in the school, and checked the school's website. I also analysed the range of views expressed by 17 staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire about the school.