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Paul Moriarty
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Dear Mr Moriarty

Short inspection of Good Shepherd RC School

Following my visit to the school on 6 July 2016, 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 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders and governors have ensured that the good standards achieved at the time of the last inspection have been improved further. As a result, pupils who left the school in July 2015 achieved standards which were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Overall, pupils left Good Shepherd well prepared for secondary school.

You have made sure that children in the early years classes make good progress from their starting points. In 2014 and 2015, the proportion of children reaching the expected standard by the end of the Reception year was well above the national average. Good teaching ensures that children develop early reading and writing skills quickly. Pupils in Year 1 achieve higher than the national average in the phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) screening check. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 is also higher than the national average.

You have successfully addressed the area for improvement from the previous inspection in terms of building on the progress made in the early years during key stage 1. Standards have risen each year in reading, writing and mathematics since the inspection. You have worked hard to ensure that best practice has been shared across the school to improve teaching and learning. However, subject leaders

recognise that not all feedback and guidance to pupils helps them to make strong progress. Occasionally, pupils are not given time to respond to feedback and sometimes comments in books do not help pupils understand what they need to do next to improve their learning.

While pupils generally make consistently strong progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics, there remain some pockets of weaker progress. A small number of disadvantaged pupils across the school do not make the same strong progress as others. Boys achieve less well than girls in early literacy skills at the end of the Reception year and they make less progress in writing than girls at the end of key stage 2. Since the previous inspection leaders have rightly focused on raising overall attainment, but the improvement plans have not focused sharply on closing these remaining gaps in achievement.

Pupils genuinely love their school and the adults who work with them. Parents speak highly of you and your staff. You ensure that the school is very effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the broad and rich curriculum on offer and through the special events such as the 'international day' which was taking place this week. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite, respectful and welcoming. They are lively and interesting in conversation and are a credit to the school, to their parents and to the community.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils feel safe and are kept safe at school. They are aware of how to keep themselves safe, learning about e-safety in lessons and about other aspects of keeping safe during assemblies. Staff receive appropriate training. However, the administration and record-keeping in relation to safeguarding lacks clear organisation. You recognised this during the inspection and took immediate action to improve your systems. Incidents are now organised chronologically; descriptions of actions taken to safeguard children, as well as the outcomes of these actions, are easier to access. During the inspection, parents raised concerns about road safety outside the entrance to the school. You intend to take action to improve this situation.

Inspection findings

- Leaders, governors and staff have worked hard to ensure that pupils at Good Shepherd continue to achieve well. You make sure that pupils are happy and that they enjoy the broad, interesting curriculum that you provide. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and supportive. Pupils behave well and there is a strong sense of family and community throughout the school.
- Middle leaders are extremely enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subjects or phases that they are responsible for. They have collectively improved the quality of teaching since the previous inspection through the training and guidance they have provided for staff. They have an accurate

understanding of the actions they need to take to improve teaching further.

- You make rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and you tackle swiftly any identified weaknesses. English and mathematics subject leaders are insightful and accurate in their checking of the impact of teachers' feedback and guidance to pupils. They are aware that not all feedback helps pupils to make rapid progress and they know exactly what they need to do to support further improvement. Subject leaders are highly skilled and keen to develop their skills further by being more involved in prioritising actions to continue the school's journey to becoming outstanding.
- Leaders have made sure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from good teaching and excellent care. As a result, they make good progress from their various starting points.
- Leaders at all levels do not fully use the information they have about the achievement of different groups of pupils to inform their plans for improvement. Plans do not identify clearly enough the need to close the gap between the achievement of boys and girls in writing, or to accelerate the progress that disadvantaged pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Parents agree that children enjoy a stimulating start to their education in the early years. The provision is vibrant and lively inside and outside the classrooms. Adults support and nurture the children so that they make good progress in all areas of learning. Since the previous inspection, the sharp focus on developing early writing has ensured that children are writing confidently and applying their early phonics skills well. However, there are gaps between the achievement of boys and girls, particularly in the development of early literacy skills.
- Governors provide good support and challenge to the school. They are determined to improve the school further. They fulfil their statutory duties and have plans in place to ensure that they are fully up to date with current training and guidance so that they can continue to keep pupils safe.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching helps to further narrow the gaps between the achievement of boys and girls in writing, and in the progress made by some disadvantaged pupils and others
- guidance and feedback to pupils helps them to make consistently strong progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Ruth Dollner
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, the chair of the governing body and all members of the leadership team. I spoke to a representative of the local authority and to the regional schools commissioner. I visited with you all classes from Nursery to Year 6 to observe teaching and to look at pupils' work. I talked to pupils in the playground, in lessons and as they moved around the building. I evaluated recent information about pupils' achievement. I looked at your records for keeping pupils safe, your policies and other documents relating to governance. I considered the views of parents I met during the morning, the 21 responses to Parent View (the online Ofsted questionnaire), and to the school's own recent parent survey.