

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



17 January 2017

Mr Mark Hewitt
Headteacher
St James & St John Church of England Primary School
4 Craven Terrace
London
W2 3QD

Dear Mr Hewitt

Short inspection of St James & St John Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 November 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 March 2012.

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 tackled effectively the areas identified for improvement in the last inspection report.

In 2016, the vast majority of pupils achieved better than all pupils nationally in writing. Pupils have many opportunities to write regularly and to apply key writing skills in a range of different contexts. Teachers use pupils' writing well to exemplify key components required to write successfully. This is a direct result of a continuous focus on strengthening the quality of teaching. Despite a high turnover of teaching staff over the last 18 months, governors and leaders have maintained effective teaching through the recruitment of six new talented teachers. You have raised expectations for pupils' achievement. Staff are enthusiastic to improve their practice. Teachers are keen to try out new ideas and share what works well with their colleagues, as a result of the collaborative approach you promote. Tailored support and training for individual teachers from the leader for teaching and learning, and increasingly from subject leaders, are having a significant impact on pupils' achievement.

Pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics. However, some groups of pupils make less progress than other groups in these two subjects in key stage 2. In reading, these groups are boys, those who find learning hard and the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. Average ability pupils and boys achieve less well in mathematics. Younger pupils in key stage 1 make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, but underachieve in science.

You wasted no time in bolstering leadership capacity, as a result of the vacant deputy headteacher's role, and the promotion of previous subject leaders. The experienced leader from an outstanding school is a significant driver for improving the quality of teaching and learning. You quickly identified potential leadership and judiciously promoted teachers from within school. The new English, mathematics and science leaders complement your work and that of the teaching and learning leader. The teaching lead supports these middle leaders well. They have made an excellent start in making sure that teachers are supported effectively. They observe their colleagues teaching and use this information to provide them with insightful and valuable feedback. They check how well teachers are implementing their advice. They are also effective role models for good and outstanding practice.

Governors were determined to appoint a headteacher who had the experience and determination to move the school forward rapidly. They told me that following your appointment you have developed and honed their leadership skills. They are now more strategic, having undertaken a review of their roles and responsibilities. As a result, they have restructured governor committees so that they have a better overview of the school's performance. They use their knowledge well to support and challenge you and other leaders. However, they have yet to develop an independent view of the school's performance to make sure that you and your leaders are moving the school at a fast pace towards excellence.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders and governors fulfil their statutory safeguarding duties well to ensure that pupils are kept safe. The safeguarding policy is implemented rigorously. All training is up to date and ensures that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities. As a result, staff are fully aware of their safeguarding duties, and know what to do if concerns are identified or raised. All the required checks to make sure adults are suitable to work with children are undertaken and recorded meticulously. The two other designated safeguarding leads support you well. You provide a range of early help and intervention. This includes regular meetings and specific therapies, to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families are given help, support and advice, when required. You liaise well with external agencies, and use their expertise to raise awareness of potential abuse, including domestic violence.

Pupils have a keen understanding of how to keep themselves and their friends safe. They told me that they feel very safe and secure in school. Pupils say this is a 'telling school'. They explained that this means everyone is confident to speak up about their concerns. They are entirely confident staff will always listen and sort out any issues or concerns they may have. Pupils also told me that there are very few incidents of bullying, confirmed by the school records. Leaders provide a safe place for the pupils to learn, thrive and develop into responsible and respectful individuals.

Inspection findings

- You have made sure that everyone has a very clear vision of where you want the school to be in the future. Collectively, you know what needs to be done and importantly, you and your staff have the right skills, expertise and experience to get there. You use monitoring information well to evaluate accurately the school's performance. Thus, you are able to prioritise correctly what needs to be done next, as well as targeting actions where they are most needed to secure further improvement.
- As well as support for staff from within the school, you have forged strong links with two outstanding schools. Visits to these schools mean that everyone appreciates what outstanding looks like, which encourages staff to aspire to this. Subject leaders told me that they and their colleagues are happy with the changes you have initiated. They say that you have 'introduced innovation' and that 'it is impressive that everyone has got on with implementing the changes'. Staff morale is high. Equally, parental satisfaction is also very positive.
- Importantly, you immediately set about making sure that assessments are accurate through in-house moderation of pupils' work. Much work has been undertaken to secure consistency in teaching, learning and assessment practice. This includes improved planning, so that activities better meet the needs of pupils and pupils receive better feedback on how to improve their work. However, first-hand observations show that teachers need to refine their ongoing assessments in lessons and over time further. Work in pupils' books confirms that teachers do not always assess pupils' understanding well enough in mathematics lessons. As a result, pupils who have grasped a concept are not always given harder work to move their learning on at a fast pace. This slows their progress down.
- You and other leaders recognise that more work is needed to make sure that all pupils, irrespective of their starting points, achieve well in reading, including achieving the expected standard in the phonics check. You have implemented a range of strategies to boost progress following a review of phonics provision. This includes one-to-one support for those pupils who are at risk of not achieving the expected standard as well as additional activities to make sure older pupils catch up with their peers. Less able pupils read regularly to teaching assistants. However, the impact of this support to boost progress is not systematically checked. Therefore you cannot be certain whether additional activities are effective enough in narrowing the disparity between different groups' achievement.
- From my own observations, teaching assistants do not always articulate the sounds letters make accurately, which inhibits pupils' ability to blend sounds to read unfamiliar words. Those pupils who find learning hard and those who have special educational needs or disabilities do not have suitable resources to support their learning effectively in phonics. The most able pupils who read to me were fluent, confident and expressive readers. Those pupils who find reading difficult struggled to decode unfamiliar words in their reading book. The text was too difficult and lacked relevance for them.
- The mathematics leader is well aware that there are too few opportunities for pupils to use and apply their problem-solving skills in mathematics, and in other

subjects, particularly in science. Attainment in science in Year 6 was just above the national figure in science. However, attainment in Year 2 was below average. Work in books established that there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to work scientifically. There is an over-reliance on worksheets, which prevents pupils organising their own work or planning their own investigations.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils have more opportunities to investigate in science, and to use and apply their problem-solving skills in mathematics and science
- teaching assistants have phonics training so that they can support pupils' learning more effectively; less able pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have resources to support their learning; reading books for the less able pupils are better matched to their skills and interests; and the impact of support strategies to boost progress is assessed regularly
- teachers assess pupils' work more accurately so that activities always make pupils think hard about their learning in mathematics
- governors gather their own information about the school's performance so that they are able to provide even further challenge for leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector agreed to focus on the following areas with the school at the start of the inspection:

- the impact of the new leadership team in securing further improvements
- how well phonics is taught in key stage 1 and reading in key stage 2 especially for boys and those who need to catch up, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- how effectively mathematics is taught to ensure that all ability groups are challenged to work at greater depth, particularly middle-ability pupils and the most able pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and boys
- how well science is taught in key stage 1.

The inspector carried out the following activities to explore these areas during the inspection:

- visits to most classes in the school, jointly with leaders
- a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils
- meetings held with senior and middle leaders, governors, including the chair and vice-chair, the diocese representative and a telephone discussion with the deputy director of the local authority
- a scrutiny of 53 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View
- listening to pupils reading, including the most able and less able pupils
- discussions with pupils about the school and how safe they feel
- a scrutiny of documentation, including school development plans, evaluations, safeguarding information, information on pupils' achievement and minutes of meetings.