

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Sandra Park
Seer Green Church of England School
School Lane
Seer Green
Beaconsfield
Buckinghamshire
HP9 2QJ

Dear Mrs Park

Short inspection of Seer Green Church of England School

Following my visit to the school on 23 March 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

You and the leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your arrival in September 2016, you have rightly identified that this is a school with many strengths. For example, the values of thoughtfulness, respect, responsibility, honesty, and perseverance successfully underpin the inclusive curriculum that is on offer to pupils. These values also describe your leadership perfectly. You lead with insight, compassion and a desire to help everyone learn and achieve together. Consequently, despite identifying that some areas of the school's work could be even better, you have secured the commitment of leaders, staff, and the community to bring about the necessary changes to improve pupils' outcomes further.

Governance at the school is very strong. You work well with members of the governing body so that they know the school well. They have established systems and processes to ensure an effective overview of what is going well and what could be better. Governors visit the school regularly to check that the experiences of staff and pupils match what they have discussed with leaders in meetings. They demonstrate strong strategic leadership by looking beyond the school walls to ensure that the school remains effective. For example, they are sensibly exploring what the benefits might be of collaborating with other schools that are already part of established multi-academy trusts.

Pupils are rightly very proud of the school and the many unique features of the experiences they are given. For example, the quality of provision in the arts,

particularly music, is excellent. Teachers make exceptional use of the extensive grounds and resources that are available to make learning fun and meaningful. Together with the warm and caring relationships between staff and pupils, this has helped engender a very strong sense of community.

The quality of teaching remains good. Strong relationships permeate through every class, where teachers set high expectations. Teachers' use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding is strong and helps pupils to think more deeply about tasks. Teachers use assessment well during lessons to check that pupils understand tasks and know what they are doing.

Your arrival has added renewed vigour and energy to the leadership of the school. Despite the school's many strengths, you have recognised that pupils could still do better in some areas. You have made excellent use of external advisers to challenge and support you and your leadership team. For example, advisers from Buckinghamshire Learning Trust and the Diocese of Oxford have dovetailed their work effectively to get underneath areas that you rightly believe could be even better. This has helped to ensure that your analysis of provision and plans for improvement are pertinent and appropriate. Consequently, you are already beginning to make a marked difference to the effectiveness of the school.

Pupils make excellent progress in reading, the humanities, music and in their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. However, some pupils could still make better progress in their writing. Similarly, most groups of pupils make strong progress, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and there is no difference in the progress of boys compared to girls. However, you have rightly identified that the most able, including those who are also disadvantaged, are not consistently challenged and so some do not do as well as they should.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is highly effective. You work closely with the deputy headteacher to ensure that all statutory duties are fulfilled. Together, you ensure that there are strong lines of accountability and easy access for staff and other stakeholders to share and record concerns if necessary. An open and sharing culture means that staff share concerns in a timely manner. Work with other agencies, although rarely needed, is very effective.

Staff benefit from well-planned and comprehensive safeguarding training. Consequently, they are very effective in fulfilling the requirements of the school's safeguarding policies, which refer to the latest statutory guidance. Safer recruitment processes are very effective. Leaders carry out all required checks on the suitability of new staff and record that they have happened on a single central register.

Pupils and parents report unreservedly that they believe that pupils are kept safe. Opportunities in the curriculum to develop pupils' self-awareness are very well utilised. Consequently, pupils are very aware of what they need to do to be safe,

including when using the internet, and who to go to if they are concerned.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I focused on how effectively leaders have tackled the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection; the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements; whether girls do as well as boys; how inclusive the school is for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; and the effectiveness of the early years.
- Leaders responded positively to the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection. They were asked to improve pupils' writing, make the feedback given to pupils by staff more effective and to improve the challenge given to the most able pupils. Teachers now give pupils useful opportunities to write at length and across different areas of the curriculum. You have rightly recognised that this has helped pupils develop greater stamina in their writing. However, this has not necessarily helped pupils write to the standard required by the new national expectations.
- Since your arrival, leaders have improved how teachers model effective writing. This is already making a difference, particularly to the progress of the less able. Pupils are now developing the technical skills needed to write with competence and clarity. However, the strategy is too recent to see sustained impact over time. Consequently, writing remains an area for further improvement.
- Leaders' actions to improve feedback to pupils have been effective. Teachers implement the school's policy consistently. All pupils spoken to explained in detail how learning is organised in their lessons and how feedback relates directly to what they were learning. Pupils use the feedback given to improve their work diligently.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have changed how teachers present work to pupils of different abilities. Pupils self-select learning activities that are either 'hard', 'tricky' or 'challenging'. Pupils are clear about the expectation to challenge themselves. However, some pupils do not use this system well enough and so do not consistently choose the activities that are most appropriate for their ability, particularly the most able. Furthermore, teachers do not do enough to ensure that the most able benefit from work that deepens and broadens their development sufficiently. Consequently, too few achieve the higher standards of which they are capable. Therefore, the challenge for the most able remains an area for improvement.
- Historic assessment information suggests that some girls do not make as much progress as they could. Review of pupils' work, analysis of their learning in lessons and discussions with female pupils all support leaders' view that girls do equally as well as boys across all areas of the curriculum. At points, some boys demonstrate a greater willingness to take risks in their work. As a result, some make better progress in subjects where greater reasoning is required, such as mathematics. However, this is not a consistent picture. In other subjects, girls often apply themselves more readily. Overall, individuals typically define the differences in the progress of groups across subjects. Girls' access and

application across the curriculum are equal to those of boys.

- The leadership of special educational needs provision is excellent. The special educational needs coordinator holds a very secure overview of pupils who are on the special educational needs register. She has implemented excellent systems that meet the statutory expectations of the new code of practice. For example, leaders have woven the views of all pupils on the register, and their parents, into the package of support that staff deliver at the school.
- Pupils report unreservedly that this is an inclusive school. One Year 6 pupil said, 'It is fine to be different here – no one gives you a hard time.' Staff employ effective strategies to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities access the same learning opportunities as their peers. For example, teachers adapt their questioning and give pupils with processing needs more time to answer. Teaching assistants know the pupils they work with exceptionally well. They engender positive relationships and help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to enjoy lessons and make strong progress.
- Leaders make very good use of the resources that are available. For example, they target the pupil premium and special educational needs and/or disabilities funding appropriately and effectively. Consequently, the very few pupils in these groups make at least the same progress as their peers and often better. For example, their progress in writing is already accelerating because of the new writing initiative introduced this academic year.
- The early years is highly effective. Leadership of the early years is excellent. Leaders have a clear understanding of what the provision does well and where improvements are needed. As seen across the school, the care and attention of staff and a thirst for learning shine through children's use of the enabling environment. Teachers know their children exceptionally well. Excellent links exist between parents and teachers and this helps to ensure that assessments closely reflect the skills and abilities of children. Staff make good use of what they know about children to carefully plan and deliver learning opportunities to help children make rapid progress.
- The environment is highly engaging and provides well for all areas of learning across the early years foundation stage. Staff respond cleverly to children's interests so that learning stays interesting and engaging. For example, a recent study about dinosaurs resulted in children designing and building their own time-travel machines. Children demonstrate strong collaborative skills and a desire to do well. Consequently, children leave the early years very well prepared for key stage 1, reflected in the high proportion of pupils who typically leave with a good level of development.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they build on the recent success in improving writing so that pupils make the same excellent progress as they do in other subjects

- the most able pupils are challenged more consistently in their learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Barnes
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the deputy headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, a group of governors including the chair of the governing body, leaders responsible for the early years and special educational needs and/or disabilities provision, advisers from Buckinghamshire Learning Trust and the Diocese of Oxford and a group of pupils. Inspectors visited eight lessons, all accompanied by the headteacher, to observe teaching and to talk to pupils about what they were learning. They considered the responses of 75 parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as several responses to the free-text service. Inspectors analysed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan, minutes of governors' meetings, monitoring information and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures.