

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mrs Karen Price  
Headteacher  
Caton St Paul's Church of England Primary School  
Moorside Road  
Brookhouse  
Lancaster  
Lancashire  
LA2 9PJ

Dear Mrs Price

### **Short inspection of Caton St Paul's Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 19 April 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 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. Although the school has grown in size since it was last inspected, the warm and friendly family ethos is still a strong and distinguishable characteristic of the school's culture. Pupils new to the school speak very positively about how they have been welcomed and supported by staff and pupils.

You have responded well to the previous inspection's recommendations for improvement. Your introduction of a more creative curriculum clearly excites and inspires pupils. Pupils told me that they never get bored in school and spoke enthusiastically about their work. It was clear that topics on the rainforest and the second world war had contributed much to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The high profile given to physical education and sport is appreciated by many pupils and promotes their physical and mental well-being very effectively. Pupils of all ages relish the regular opportunities to learn outdoors. This is something you have systematically developed since you were appointed, soon after the last inspection. You have also ensured significant improvement to the outdoor provision for children in the early years. A rich variety of outdoor activities now matches the high quality of provision indoors. Children have stimulating opportunities to develop personal, social and physical skills, creativity, knowledge of the world, literacy and numeracy skills, including through play. For example, during the inspection, two boys digging outside decided to stop and consider how they would plan their new garden, with one commenting 'Let's write a book about it!'

From the early years onwards, pupils are taught well. Teachers plan work that motivates pupils. They are making increasingly effective use of assessment information to ensure that pupils of all abilities are supported and challenged to deepen their learning. During the inspection, younger pupils' understanding of tens and ones was reinforced well as they eagerly hunted the picture clue cards that staff had hidden outside. Pupils matched these to numbers on their worksheets and showed their understanding by writing a corresponding number sentence. Older pupils were challenged to calculate the number of possible combinations of double ice-cream cones from six flavours. Expectations that pupils should reason, justify and explain their strategies added depth to their learning.

The high expectations you have set for pupils' behaviour are well met. In lessons and around the school pupils behave extremely well. Where behaviour falls short of the standard expected, pupils are helped to reflect on what triggered the behaviour and its consequences. Pupils' own views of behaviour are positive. They consider that the school's system is fair and like the credits and VIP certificates they can earn for good behaviour. Pupils' comments included, 'The school is a happy place' and 'There is hardly any bad behaviour or bullying.' Pupils enjoy and benefit from the many and varied opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example as school councillors and members of the eco and worship committees. These enable pupils to appreciate the importance and value of contributing to their community.

You lead the school well. The work you have done to extend and develop the senior leadership team and ensure that all staff recognise the part they play in the school's development has increased the school's capacity to improve further. Governors are good friends to the school and committed to supporting its improvement. They ask probing questions about pupils' achievement, including about groups for whom the school receives additional funding, such as disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This enables governors to check the impact of the school's spending on improving pupils' achievement and personal development.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders show great care and attention to fulfilling their safeguarding duties. You have made sure that there is a high level of safeguarding expertise across leaders and that staff receive regular training so that their understanding of how to keep pupils safe is up-to-date. National safeguarding guidance is shared so that staff and governors are aware of how to protect pupils from potential harm, such as radical and extremist views. Where specific expertise is needed, leaders communicate well with other professionals. The school's learning mentor plays an important role in supporting pupils and families. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They explained about the worry box they can use if they want to share any concerns and consider that staff would act quickly to deal with any issues. The pupils that I spoke to had a good understanding of bullying and of how to keep safe when using the internet. The overwhelming majority of parents consider that the school looks after their children and keeps them safe.

## Inspection findings

- We agreed that writing would be a key line of enquiry for this inspection. This was because the 2016 Year 6 assessments showed pupils' progress in writing to be weaker than in reading and mathematics. Similarly, although most Year 6 and Year 2 pupils attained the expected standard in the 2016 writing assessments, the proportions writing at greater depth were lower than pupils nationally. You had already identified writing as a priority for improvement. You and your new deputy headteacher, who now leads English across the school, explained the reasons for the dip in writing in 2016 and the action being taken to address this issue. Pupils' work showed that the introduction of daily lessons in grammar, punctuation and spelling and the higher expectations of pupils' handwriting are improving these technical aspects of writing. Leaders' expectations that pupils will apply these skills when writing across a range of subjects is also becoming increasingly evident in their work. The expectation that pupils will produce three extended pieces of writing a week across different subjects is helping pupils to develop the stamina needed to write at length and in greater depth. The steps that have been taken to secure improvements in pupils' writing are paying off, but are still being embedded across the school.
- In 2016, Year 6 pupils' reading and mathematics test results showed that all groups progressed well from their prior attainment. The proportions attaining the higher standards were also above average. At the end of key stage 1, however, the proportions of pupils working at greater depth in these subjects were significantly below average. In our discussions on this matter you explained that the school's assessment information for different year groups showed some variability in the proportions of pupils working at greater depth. As such, you had identified developing greater depth in teaching and learning as a priority for improvement. The rigorous and robust system that has been established to assess pupils' attainment and track their progress is supporting this improvement. You and other leaders use assessment information well to inform the termly meetings with staff about pupils' progress. In the same way, the information that you and other leaders gain from visits to lessons and reviews of pupils' work are enabling useful evaluations of the extent to which teaching is deepening pupils' learning. You have set challenging targets for pupils to achieve greater depth in their learning in this year's statutory tests and assessments and feel confident that these will be achieved. However, you recognise that more work is needed to ensure that depth of learning is firmly established across all year groups and subjects.
- The range of evidence you provided during the inspection showed how the school's curriculum promotes pupils' understanding of British values and equalities. In my discussions with pupils it was clear that they had a secure understanding of the principles of British values and of the need to respect diversity. However, while there are some notable strengths in the way the school promotes this aspect of pupils' personal development, there was insufficient evidence to show how the school develops their understanding of the full range of diversity, specifically that relating to sexual orientation. In discussions with pupils it was apparent that they have heard and sometimes been the target of homophobic name-calling. Pupils expressed confidence in the school's ability to

deal with this type of behaviour should they report it. However, there was no evidence of how pupils are taught about this type of prejudicial behaviour and its impact, for example on individuals' mental health. By contrast, there is plentiful evidence of how pupils are taught about the impact of other types of prejudicial behaviour, such as that relating to race, culture and religion.

- The attendance and punctuality of most pupils is good. The weaker attendance and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities last year comprised a very small number of pupils. You were able to show the reasons for these absences, which were beyond the school's control. You make rigorous checks on absences and take an appropriately strong stance on authorising absences in term time to ensure that pupils' education is not interrupted.
- Most parents are very happy with the level and frequency of communication from the school. Many commented very positively on this and on the support they have received from you and other staff. Parents can access a comprehensive range of information from the school's website, but there is limited information to help parents understand how they can help keep their children safe when using the internet.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the effective work underway to improve the breadth and depth of pupils' writing continues so that progress and standards in writing improve
- the proportions of pupils reaching the higher standards and working at greater depth by the end of both key stages are at least in line with national averages
- the provision for promoting British values and equalities is further enhanced by more explicitly addressing the protected characteristic of sexual orientation so that pupils are fully prepared for life in modern Britain
- parents are given more information about how they can help keep their children safe when using the internet.

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

Yours sincerely

Margot D'Arcy  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I met with you to discuss leaders' evaluations of the school

and their priorities for improvement. We visited classrooms in all key stages to observe learning and behaviour. I observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and as they moved around the school. I held a formal meeting with a group of key stage 2 pupils about their views and experiences of the school and spoke to others informally at breaktimes. I met with five governors and had a telephone discussion with a representative of Lancashire local authority. I reviewed a sample of pupils' writing with the deputy headteacher, who is subject leader for English. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including that pertaining to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, assessment and leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning. I spoke to parents as they brought their children to school and considered 53 responses to Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, including 30 written comments.