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19 November 2017

Miss Joanne Barker
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Barker

Short inspection of St Paul's Peel CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 31 October 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 May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment as headteacher in September 2017, following a period as acting headteacher, you have provided unassuming, determined and confident leadership. You have united all staff and governors and fostered a team approach at St Paul's Peel CofE Primary. As one governor commented: 'We work together and support each other as part of St Paul's Peel family.' Staff are very supportive of you and your leadership team. They understand what you expect from them and they are fully committed to the school's mission. You have high expectations of staff and they do their best for the pupils in your care. You have worked hard to ensure that your new leaders have the skills and confidence to lead in the areas for which they are responsible.

You have quickly pinpointed the school's strengths and weaknesses. Your detailed self-evaluation and improvement plan clearly identify the priorities for improving the school further. Highly effective training, good systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and regular meetings to check pupils' progress have all helped to ensure that both the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement continue to be good.

The school is a very happy and caring community. Pupils thrive in a calm and purposeful learning environment. They are well behaved, courteous and polite at all times. In lessons, they show positive attitudes to the teacher, to their learning and to each other. These factors make a strong contribution to the friendly and

welcoming atmosphere that pervades the school. The life of the school is enhanced by the willingness of pupils to take on responsibility, such as by being a member of the school council. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their comments, for example, 'We like school because teachers are friendly and everyone looks after each other.' Parents are equally appreciative. One parent commented: 'My children are happy at this school. I feel that every effort is made to resolve any issues that I have brought up with regard to my children's education and welfare.'

Governors are also a key strength of the school. As a group they are committed and rightly proud of the success of the school and its pupils. They ensure that they have first-hand evidence of the quality of education that the school provides. Governors equally have a full overview of the progress that pupils make. They appreciate the reports that you provide for them. These ensure that governors have a good understanding of the school's performance information and an accurate overview of the quality of teaching. You appreciate the support that they provide and welcome the challenge that they bring to improve the school further.

At the previous inspection, inspectors asked you to improve further the quality of teaching. You were asked to ensure that you undertake more rigorous checks on the effect of teaching on pupils' learning and progress. Since the last inspection, leaders, supported by the school improvement partner, have carried out significant checks on the quality of teaching and learning. Added to this, leaders undertake regular analyses of work in pupils' books and they continually analyse pupils' performance. The assessment leader is very clear about the performance of all groups of learners, across all phases of the school. Teachers now use this information well to plan effective lessons. Staff appreciate the feedback that they receive from lesson observations because this helps them to improve their teaching. As one teacher commented: 'Leaders provide examples of planning and work alongside staff, offering good suggestions and ideas.' This information is used well by staff to plan lessons that meet the needs of different groups of learners.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of keeping pupils safe in the school. Leaders complete careful safeguarding checks on all staff, governors and volunteers. Staff and governors receive regular and appropriate training so that they know how to keep pupils safe. Summary records of incidents of concern, no matter how small, are meticulously kept using leaders' new online system. Staff demonstrate a detailed knowledge of safeguarding issues. This means that they are all well placed to spot any signs of potential risk or abuse. Staff are very clear about following the expected reporting procedures and leaders are prompt in their follow-up response.

In addition, you have used funding effectively to provide a children's families officer. This person is a key team member who ensures that all staff maintain the highest standards of practice. Relationships with parents and external agencies are very strong. As a school your commitment to supporting families at times of need is commendable. Pupils at the school feel safe. Around the school there are constant reminders to help the pupils focus on safety. For example, 'Say no or say nothing'

safety rules are posted in all classrooms and corridors. The overwhelming majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, feel that their children are safe and well cared for.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry, the first of which related to the areas from the last inspection. You have focused effectively on improving the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that more rigorous checks are undertaken. The impact of these checks was evident from our visits to the classrooms during the inspection. In all classes pupils were attentive and committed to doing their best. Pupils were hard-working in lessons and showed determination and resilience in completing the tasks their teachers set them. They are rightly proud of their books, which are well presented.
- A further line of enquiry related to the progress of the most able pupils in writing at key stage 2. The most able pupils did not perform as well as their peers nationally at the highest levels in writing at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 and 2017. In response to this, leaders have adapted their teaching and learning strategy for writing. During the inspection we saw stimulating writing lessons that used focused texts to promote good learning and progress. For example, pupils were inspired by the text 'Wonder' as a stimulus and inspiration to support their writing. They engaged in a process of redrafting their own writing and produced good work of which they were very proud. The most able pupils said that they enjoyed this new approach. However, you know that there is further work to do to ensure that the most able pupils are routinely challenged to write at the highest level.
- The final line of enquiry related to progress in reading across the school. Leaders have already identified that following good progress in early years, pupils are not making the necessary progress in the development of their phonic skills at key stage 1. In previous years, pupils performed less well than their peers nationally in the phonics screening check. In response to this, teachers and teaching assistants have undergone a range of additional training. Detailed assessments are now carried out to ensure that all pupils are put into their appropriate learning group, regardless of their age. All pupils in Years 1 and 2 are now provided with additional taught phonics sessions. During the inspection we observed a number of these sessions and they were extremely effective in promoting learning and progress. Staff had good subject knowledge. Pupils enjoyed the sessions and responded well to their teachers. Consequently, more pupils now make better progress in their reading.
- Nevertheless, pupils still do not yet make the same rates of progress in reading as they do in mathematics and writing. This is because pupils still need support to develop their comprehension skills. As with writing, leaders have introduced a shared text to help pupils improve their reading and comprehension skills. At key stage 2, pupils enjoy this and are committed to individual daily reading at the start of the day and after lunchtime. Work in pupils' books shows evidence of some good comprehension work. However, this work is not consistently challenging enough to help some pupils to make the progress of which they are

capable. Leaders acknowledge that there is more work to do to ensure that pupils achieve their potential in reading right across the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils are challenged more rigorously in writing, so that they can reach the highest standard by the end of key stage 2
- comprehension tasks are challenging enough to ensure that pupils achieve the same high standard in reading as they do writing and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Morley
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection I met with you, your assistant headteachers and the children's families officer. I met with five members of the governing body, including the chair. I also met with your school improvement partner. I met with eight pupils from key stages 1 and 2 and spoke with others during break and lunchtimes. Alongside yourself and one of the assistant headteachers, I visited a number of classes where I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils. I also heard pupils from Years 2 and 6 read. I took account of 18 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including five free-text responses. I also considered the views of 18 staff through Ofsted's online questionnaire. No responses were received to the online questionnaire for pupils. A range of documents was considered relating to safeguarding, performance management and external evaluations of the school's performance. I examined the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, current information about pupils' attainment and progress, and records of behaviour and safeguarding, including the single central record. I also undertook a review of the school's website.