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24 April 2018

Anthony Gibbons
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Gibbons

Short inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Roehampton

Following my visit to the school on 13 March 2018, 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your leadership team have developed the school within the context of its Christian ethos. You have fostered strong partnerships with the local community, including sports clubs and the University of Roehampton. These partnerships have made a positive contribution to your efforts to strengthen the quality of teaching and ensure that all pupils learn well.

Pupils' behaviour, seen both inside and outside of school, was impeccable and they are respectful and considerate of others. For example, they use their knowledge of the United Nations Convention of Rights for the Child to discuss concepts of fairness and democracy with confidence. At the same time, pupils enjoy learning about other faiths, including those practised by their peers. Visits to local places of worship are used to enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding. Parents and carers spoke positively about how the school promoted pupils' respect for different viewpoints and faiths.

You have diligently addressed the areas for improvement identified at your previous inspection. The introduction of phase leaders, who oversee different year groups, has added a further dimension to the middle leadership of the school. As well as managing areas of the curriculum, middle leaders keep a close eye on pupils' outcomes in different subjects. Together, leaders are quick to identify and address aspects of the school that need to be even better. This ensures that, over time, pupils' outcomes remain strong.

Your work to raise standards is proving successful. In 2017, the proportion of Year 6 pupils who attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics increased and was above other schools nationally. Nevertheless, over time, teaching does not routinely secure substantial gains in pupils' skills and knowledge during key stage 2. This is particularly the case in reading and for the most able pupils. These areas were identified as a focus for this inspection.

Governors play a large part in the life of the school, visiting frequently and providing support for, and a measure of challenge to, your work. Governors are keen to strengthen the way in which they hold leaders to account. For example, governors recently completed training on how to use assessment information to challenge leaders on the impact of their work. In addition, the governing body also has plans in place to reorganise roles and responsibilities to make the best use of different members' expertise. During this transition period, you are keen to ensure continuity so that the effectiveness of governance is maintained.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders' arrangements for safeguarding pupils are appropriate and secure. Staff give the safety and well-being of pupils the highest priority. You and your team are vigilant to signs that a pupil's welfare may be at risk. Staff raise concerns promptly. Through detailed and high-quality records, leaders acquire a comprehensive picture of pupils' needs. This means that they are quick to spot when pupils need extra help to secure their welfare. When concerns are raised, leaders work well with external agencies to check that the action taken is timely and effective.

The strong culture of safeguarding is underpinned by clear procedures and training for staff. Staff are aware of different risks and how to address them. Staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire unanimously agreed that pupils are kept safe at the school.

Staff recruitment is overseen by suitably trained staff and governors, who ensure that pre-employment checks are carried out in accordance with requirements. The majority of parents agree that their children are safe and happy in school.

Inspection findings

- At our initial meeting we agreed on two key lines of enquiry. The first was pupils' reading at key stage 2. This was because, in 2017, pupils' progress in reading, although average, was lower than in writing and mathematics. This was especially the case for disadvantaged pupils and most-able pupils. Your self-evaluation also highlighted reading as an area for development.
- The profile of reading across the school has been raised, with a particular focus on encouraging pupils to read widely and often. Parents are positive about the changes you have made. As one parent put it, 'My children can't stop reading.' One of your strategies to raise standards in reading was to research and deploy a new reading programme. This is now in place. However, the programme is still in its infancy. You recognise that more work is needed to adjust the programme so that it fully meets the needs and interests of all groups of pupils.

- Your skilled middle leaders ensure that teachers make accurate assessments of pupils' reading. They scrutinise assessment information at termly review meetings, where the class teacher and senior leaders discuss pupils' outcomes, including those of disadvantaged pupils. Together, leaders and teachers agree ambitious targets for pupils with clear timescales. Pupils who are not on track to achieve their targets benefit from extra help to ensure that they catch up. This approach is having a positive impact on improving pupils' outcomes in reading across key stage 2.
- The teaching of reading is improving because greater emphasis is now placed on ensuring that pupils develop age-appropriate comprehension skills. Pupils told me how they now feel more confident knowing which approach to use to work out the meaning of what they read. The most able pupils read with confidence, showing excellent vocabulary and comprehension.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 is strong. In 2017, the proportion of Year 2 pupils attaining the age-expected standard was above the national average. Leaders are rightly focusing on ensuring that pupils build well on their existing knowledge and understanding in lower key stage 2. Therefore, the impact of the school's work in this area was the focus of my second line of enquiry.
- Together with middle leaders, you have altered school systems to ensure that teachers across the school are clear about your aspirations for pupils' outcomes. In addition, teachers work together closely to share expertise and develop their teaching skills. This work is having a positive impact. Teachers demonstrate a secure understanding of the knowledge and understanding that pupils need to develop in each year group. As a result, teaching in lower key stage 2 is characterised by high expectations for all groups of pupils.
- Teachers typically plan tasks which take account of what pupils already know or can do well. For example, in writing, pupils deepen their skills by writing in different contexts and genres. Equally, teachers support pupils' understanding of how to edit and improve their work. For example, during my visits to classrooms in Year 3 and Year 4, pupils redrafted a piece of fictional writing, making careful choices with their vocabulary and punctuation. Pupils explained how routinely editing their work helps them to improve the quality of their writing.
- Teachers analyse pupils' progress carefully alongside year group colleagues. This enables them to provide tailored support for pupils where they identify any underachievement. Teachers and teaching assistants use their skills to good effect to address gaps in pupils' learning. Work in pupils' books and the school's assessment information show that pupils typically make good gains in their understanding as they progress through key stage 2.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's approach to the teaching of reading is fully embedded so that pupils attain the standards of which they are capable

- governors maximise how they use their respective skills and experience and thereby provide leaders with sharp and accurate challenge.

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

Yours sincerely

Jason Hughes
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. The views of staff were taken into account through the 36 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Together with the headteacher, the inspector visited classrooms across the school.
- Pupils from Years 3 and 6 were heard reading.
- School documents, including policies and safeguarding records, the school's website and governors' minutes, were scrutinised.
- The inspector reviewed work in pupils' books and held discussions with pupils about their learning. There were no responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils.
- The 35 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, were considered.
- The inspector held conversations with parents and pupils in the playground.