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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Lesley Evans
Headteacher
St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior, Infant and Early Years School
Fieldhead Lane
Birstall
Batley
West Yorkshire
WF17 9HN

Dear Mrs Evans

Short inspection of St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior, Infant and Early Years School

Following my visit to the school on 26 June 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your staff provide a high level of care for your pupils. You and your leadership team have accurately identified the strengths and areas for improvement for the school and have plans in place to make the necessary improvements. Leaders are working with teachers to further develop their leadership roles, and members of the staff team are appreciative of the support they receive. Senior leaders are visible around the school and frequently visit classrooms. This means that they have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms.

Pupils move around the school calmly and show respect for adults and for their peers. When in lessons, pupils focus on their tasks and are keen to join in discussions. Pupils listen carefully to the instructions they are given and are supportive of one another. They said that they enjoy the broad range of experiences they are fortunate to have and feel that these experiences help them to learn more in their lessons. You provide effective support for vulnerable pupils, and all staff are clear that the needs of these pupils are of utmost importance. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers said that their child is happy at school. Parents feel that their children are taught effectively and are well cared for.

During the last inspection, inspectors identified that achievement in writing was not as good as in reading and mathematics. They found that fewer pupils reached the higher standards in writing, and pupils did not have enough opportunities to apply their writing skills in other subjects. You and your leaders have worked hard to address this and have reviewed the way that writing is taught. Teachers now provide pupils with a good range of opportunities to talk about books so that they can use their ideas to improve their own writing. Regular work with an author allows pupils to think about the impact the writing they produce has on the reader. When you and I watched lessons, we found that teachers provide pupils with different criteria that help them to improve their work. Pupils appreciate this and said that it helps them to learn. Teaching assistants are used well to support different groups of pupils, including the most able.

Your leaders now check the progress that pupils make more carefully and identify more precisely what it is they need to do to improve. Your teachers use this information to plan tasks that usually meet the needs of all pupils. Evidence in books shows that activities usually provide enough challenge for all groups of pupils. Pupils write for a wide variety of reasons and now have a good range of opportunities to write in different subjects. However, they do not get enough opportunity to really deepen their understanding of different forms of writing and often move onto another piece of writing too quickly. This means that they do not get enough time to improve their writing and produce work of an even higher quality. Nevertheless, the work that you have done has been successful, and pupils make good progress in writing across the school. This has enabled more pupils to reach the higher standards in writing in each key stage.

The previous inspection identified that not all teachers reviewed how well pupils were doing in different subjects. You have now begun to develop the role of subject leaders so that they have a greater awareness of pupils' attainment in different subjects. Some of your leaders carry out checks by watching lessons, looking at pupils' work and gathering the views of pupils about their learning. They use this information to create plans to further improve teaching in the subject they are responsible for. However, not all subject leaders have carried out checks on their areas of responsibility. This means that they do not have a thorough understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in their subject. This work is in its infancy, and not enough has been done yet to use the plans that have been created or to provide teachers with their next steps to improve their practice further.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff follow the school's policies and procedures well to report any concerns they identify about pupils' welfare or well-being. Written records about any such concerns and the actions taken are timely and thorough. Actions are swift because relevant staff are notified immediately of any concerns. Evidence shows that you and your leaders work closely with families for the safety and protection of your pupils. You have good links with external agencies and work effectively with other professionals where you think more help may be needed. You have robust

procedures in place to ensure that all appropriate checks are made when recruiting new staff. Staff receive regular training to ensure that they maintain an awareness of safeguarding issues and are able to provide the support that is needed should it be necessary.

Pupils said that they feel safe in school. They have a good awareness of how to stay safe when using the internet and know what to do should they have any concerns when they are online. Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying and said that bullying is rare in school. They know the difference between bullying and falling out. Pupils are confident that adults will address any issues they have and know who to turn to for help. The curriculum provides a range of opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe. For example, there are good opportunities for pupils to increase their awareness of drugs misuse, and they recognise that medicines can be helpful.

Inspection findings

- I wanted to find out whether more pupils are reaching the higher standards in writing at the end of key stage 1. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in writing at the end of key stage 1 had been below the national average for the past two years. The work you have done to improve writing is beginning to make a difference. Pupils make good progress across key stage 1, and more pupils have reached the higher standards this year. You have identified that the quality of pupils' handwriting now needs to improve. You have introduced a new approach to the teaching of handwriting to address this, but this approach is in its early stages. Sometimes, pupils do not use punctuation and grammar accurately enough in their work. Supporting pupils to improve this aspect of their writing is an important next step.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading at the end of key stage 2 increased significantly in 2017. I wanted to find out whether this success had been sustained this year. Leaders are reflective and identified that the previous approach to the teaching of reading comprehension was not allowing the pupils to answer more complex questions about what they read. The English leader has introduced a new approach to the teaching of reading. This allows pupils to study more demanding texts and explore the vocabulary that these texts provide. Pupils have a good range of opportunities to discuss their ideas and opinions and are encouraged to justify their thoughts by using evidence from the books they are reading.
- Your leaders use assessment information well to identify what pupils need to do to improve. Regular discussions with leaders support teachers to plan the next steps required. Any issues are identified quickly, and this allows pupils more time to make improvements. As a result, pupils are making good progress in reading across the school. The good levels of attainment that pupils reached in 2017 have been sustained this year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils are able to explore types of writing more fully so that even more pupils reach the higher standards
- middle leaders use the information they gather more effectively to improve teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility
- there are higher expectations of pupils to apply the handwriting and grammatical skills they have learned to their writing across all subjects.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the diocese of Leeds (ce), the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kirklees. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jaimie Holbrook
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met you and other senior leaders and shared my lines of enquiry. I also met with members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, the subject leader for English and the designated safeguarding leader. I considered the responses of 33 parents to the Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 30 free-text comments received. I scrutinised all the responses to Ofsted's questionnaires for staff and pupils. You and I visited classes together in the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, met with a group of them and looked at samples of pupils' work. I viewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance and your plans for further improvement. I considered a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information.