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Mrs M Gordon
Headteacher
St Paul's CofE Primary School
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Dear Mrs Gordon

Short inspection of St Paul's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 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 January 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection.

There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.

The school has gone through a period of staffing instability. You were appointed as interim headteacher in September 2017 and took the post on permanently in January 2018. The senior leadership team is relatively inexperienced. You have ensured that they have access to a program of professional development that will provide them with the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the challenges of senior leadership.

You have identified priorities for school improvement and have the full support of the governing board to make the necessary changes. You have begun to instigate a number of whole-school initiatives with the aim of improving pupils' outcomes, specifically around the quality of teaching. You have developed more rigorous processes to monitor the quality of teaching and learning; you have worked with other local schools and external advisers to moderate standards. You told me that your priorities since September have been on the core subjects; however, as a result, some foundation subjects have lost momentum.

Governors have worked closely with you to develop a vision for the school, which has been shared with staff, pupils and parents. The governors are committed and possess a range of relevant skills. They are clear about their statutory responsibility to safeguard pupils and share your aspirations to provide a high

quality of education for pupils. Governors told me that since your appointment the school has become more 'outward-facing' and they are welcomed by staff and leaders. Parents' responses to the online survey also highlight concerns with the number of staff changes.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place. All checks on adults working at the school meet statutory requirements.

You and your staff promote a culture of vigilance around keeping pupils safe. Staff training is up to date; safeguarding is a high priority and is an agenda item at all staff meetings. All staff have regular and appropriate training. Staff know how to respond to any concerns that arise. The school's safeguarding policy gives clear advice to staff about how to manage any potential child protection concerns.

Governors have attended safeguarding training, including for 'Prevent' and e-safety. Personnel records are organised and show that systems are now firmly in place. Survey responses from pupils confirmed that they feel safe at school.

Inspection findings

- Our first key line of enquiry was to consider actions taken by leaders to improve pupils' outcomes in writing. We chose this key line because attainment in key stage 2 writing has been below average for the last two years.
- The school has invested in new texts and resources in order to support pupils' writing. You have implemented a programme of professional development for all staff to help them understand how writing is taught effectively. Advice has also been taken from external consultants to support the teaching of writing.
- Pupils' work since September 2017 is showing some signs of improvement. Strategies introduced to improve reading are also having a knock-on benefit for writing. Pupils are writing more often and vocabulary is improving. However, the quality of pupils' handwriting is inconsistent; basic punctuation and spelling is not consistently accurate and this has an impact on the overall quality of writing. Additionally, not enough opportunities are provided across the school for pupils to write at length.
- Our second key line of enquiry was to consider what leaders are doing to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. In 2017, disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 achieved below the national averages for reading, writing and mathematics. The progress of key stage 2 disadvantaged pupils in writing has been significantly below average for at least two years. These same pupils did not achieve well in English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Senior leaders told me that they have implemented a process for earlier identification of disadvantaged pupils who are at risk of underachieving. Senior leaders meet regularly with teachers to discuss the progress of disadvantaged pupils, which is monitored closely. Senior leaders hold teachers to account for

pupils' achievement through performance appraisal.

- Governors believe that strategies employed by the school such as interventions and withdrawal groups are ensuring that gaps are closing. The school's data indicates that the progress and attainment of disadvantaged groups is improving in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the classroom, staff are clearly making efforts to understand and counter pupil disadvantage. However, strategic direction from leaders and governors is inconsistent. There is no named governor with oversight of the pupil premium funding, as governors see it as a shared responsibility. However, the pupil premium plan lacks detail and success criteria are not specific. Consequently, the evaluation of the impact of the spending lacks clarity.
- The third key line of enquiry was to ascertain the actions that leaders are taking to improve outcomes in science. Published results in 2017 showed that key stage 2 pupils attained below average in science. Disadvantaged pupils achieved significantly below average.
- Evidence seen in topic books demonstrates that there is repeated learning across the year groups in science. Prior knowledge is not built upon. In the course of investigating this key line of enquiry, weaknesses became apparent in the wider curriculum as a whole. While all national curriculum areas are given some coverage, the depth and the consistency is too variable. Recent audits by external advisers also identified this weakness, which is having an impact on outcomes for pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' handwriting is of a consistently good standard
- pupils apply basic skills, including spelling, punctuation and grammar, correctly in their writing
- leaders ensure that the wider curriculum is given priority, so that pupils achieve across the full range of subjects, including in science
- leaders and governors give strategic oversight of funding for disadvantaged pupils and are clear about the precise impact of this spending.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of London, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Barnet.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dawn Titus

Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and members of the senior leadership team to discuss the school's self-evaluation and to develop the key lines of enquiry. I held meetings with three governors, with a representative from the local authority and a representative from the diocese. I scrutinised a range of documentation. I analysed the school's published data and their internal data. I inspected the school's single central record of recruitment checks made on staff. I checked agency staff vetting forms. I visited classrooms with senior leaders to gather evidence on pupils' progress. I looked at a range of pupils' work. I met with the English leader and the science leader. I spoke to pupils during lessons about their work. I took account of the 56 written responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, the 22 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 28 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.