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Mrs Florence Collins  
Headteacher  
St Mary's Priory RC Junior School  
Hermitage Road  
London  
N15 5RE

Dear Mrs Collins

### **Short inspection of St Mary's Priory RC Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 September 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 September 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 have set high expectations for what pupils can achieve. These expectations are based upon your vision 'To inspire children so that they become confident, independent learners for life'. You pursue high aspirations for all your pupils: 'Where great lives begin.' Your school prides itself not only in achieving good academic results, but also in providing children with a 'happy, caring, healthy and secure learning environment'. A strength of the school is the celebration of its diverse community. You provide many opportunities for parents and carers to support their children's learning, for example during your 'focus weeks'. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They work hard to support each other, are polite and resilient and take pride in their school.

You provide clear direction for the school's future improvement. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Comments such as 'the school is amazing' and 'one big family' are typical of their viewpoint. Parents appreciate that teachers know their children and the headteacher 'knows every child'. You focus strongly on academic success, as well as ensuring opportunities for pupils to participate in a broad range of activities which enhance the curriculum. You prepare pupils very well for the next stage in their education.

You have established an effective senior leadership team. Together, you have led effective improvements in teaching, and addressed the aspects for improvement that were identified in the previous inspection. You have identified appropriate

priorities to continue to improve the school.

By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, attainment and progress are above the national averages. Leaders rightly identified, however, that performance at the higher standard in reading in the 2017 key stage 2 assessments was below that for writing and mathematics. You put in place a full range of strategies to support pupils. This includes targeting individual pupils, providing additional support and introducing a new programme for reading. Improving the quality of teaching and learning is a continual focus for the leadership team.

Governors have a good understanding of the school. Their knowledge of the local community and close involvement with the school enable them to support school improvement well. Governors use a range of information effectively to challenge school leaders. They ensure that their regular visits to school enable them to see, first-hand, the work of school leaders.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are effective, and records are well kept. All checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are in place. Staff and governors have a thorough understanding of current safeguarding guidance. This includes knowledge of the 'Prevent' duty. They take this responsibility seriously and are effective in this aspect of their role. Leaders work well with families and external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive well-targeted support as required.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using online technology. School assemblies and planned learning activities help pupils to understand how to manage risks online. School leaflets support parents to keep their children safe, including from radicalisation and extremism. Pupils and parents say that the school is a safe place.

### **Inspection findings**

- I looked at the actions leaders are taking to ensure that most-able pupils are challenged effectively. This is a priority in the school improvement plan. Emphasis is rightly on ensuring sufficient challenge in lessons. This is supported by planning activities that enhance learning. The school's programme 'Potential Plus' is designed to inspire pupils. For example, every year the school hosts an artist and a poet 'in residence'. This provides additional opportunities for most-able pupils to further develop specific skills by working with experts. Most-able pupils were able to build on their poetry experience with a session on good-quality writing. Evidence from a scrutiny of work shows that most-able pupils' writing is of high quality in all year groups. Assessment information shows a greater proportion of pupils achieving the higher standards in reading and writing.
- The school continues to prioritise its work with most-able pupils. Pupils spoken to say they are challenged to work with a greater degree of accuracy. For

example, in reading, comments from most-able pupils such as 'I now check meanings of unfamiliar words independently rather than only looking at the context' were typical. Although progress in mathematics is regularly well above average, leaders recognise that more pupils need to achieve the higher standard by the end of key stage 2. There are many examples of most-able pupils involved in challenging mathematical extension activities. However, opportunities to apply what they have learned are limited.

- For the second line of enquiry, we looked at how leaders support the achievement of disadvantaged pupils to bring them in line with all pupils nationally. Additional funding through the pupil premium is spent well. Leaders have ensured that there is a full range of programmes in place, based on careful analysis of pupils' starting points. For example, reading programmes and literacy intervention groups target specific pupils. Disadvantaged pupils have been consulted on the choice of reading texts. This is enabling them to enjoy reading more and make better progress. Mathematics tuition classes after school for identified pupils have accelerated progress. Evidence from the school's assessment information shows differences are diminishing in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school has employed a counsellor to support disadvantaged pupils. This has helped reduce the number of behavioural incidents and improved attitudes to learning. Leaders recognise how important it is for parents to be able to support their children academically, and have therefore put a strong adult learning programme in place. This helps parents understand more about what is being taught in school and how they can support their child effectively. They can also achieve qualifications for themselves. Case studies show that the children of parents involved have made accelerated progress.
- Teachers work hard to ensure that learning is matched to pupils' needs. Most-able pupils work alongside those of average and lower ability and this arrangement is benefiting all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support disadvantaged pupils. Assessments each half-term enable teachers to check on what pupils have learned and where there are gaps. Evidence from classroom visits and pupils' books demonstrate that the needs of disadvantaged pupils are met.
- Finally, I looked at how the school's curriculum meets the needs of all its pupils. Leaders acknowledge that the continuing development of the curriculum is a priority. They have ensured that strategies are in place to review, revise and evaluate what is taught so that pupils enjoy learning and do well.
- Teachers agreed that the planned curriculum was not inspiring all pupils to write well. Members of the steering group formed to oversee this priority area held discussions with pupils and staff and visited other schools. This led to changes which helped more pupils achieve the expected and higher standards in writing this year.
- Leaders have drawn up a curriculum map which shows for each half-term what each year group will learn. Links have been made between English and other subjects. Within each topic, pupils will write in a range of styles and study both fiction and non-fiction texts. This cross-curricular themed approach is aimed at

helping to make learning more meaningful to the school's community. Leaders create ample opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide variety of activities. For example, pupils have sung at The Royal Albert Hall and made presentations to the mayor in the council chambers. Visits to museums, art galleries and places of interest complement projects in each year group.

- The curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education. For example, the school invites guest speakers such as doctors and engineers to inspire pupils and raise aspirations. Parents are informed through newsletters about what their children are learning and how they can support them at home.
- Evidence from visits to classes and discussions with pupils show that all are enjoying their learning. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows all groups are making progress. The senior leadership team recognises the need to continue to systematically monitor and evaluate the impact of the changes made. Further changes to the curriculum are planned so that leaders can amend where necessary.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of mathematics provides sufficient opportunities for problem-solving, reasoning and the application of what has been taught so that more pupils reach the higher standard at the end of key stage 2
- the school acts upon the findings of its evaluation of the curriculum so that it continues to meet the needs of all pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Barnes  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with the headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders. I held a meeting with members of the governing body and with the school's improvement partner. I listened to pupils read and visited lessons in classes with members of the senior leadership team. I reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, and information about pupils' progress and the school's curriculum. I scrutinised a

range of pupils' work. I reviewed the school's single central record, pre-employment checks and safeguarding procedures. I scrutinised the school's website. I listened to the views of eight parents. I considered 20 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 17 responses to the staff survey.