

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Ms Karen Fowler
Headteacher
Michael Faraday School
Portland Street
Walworth
London
SE17 2HR

Dear Ms Fowler

Short inspection of Michael Faraday School

Following my visit to the school on 25 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 October 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 are passionate in your work to motivate all pupils to want to learn and gain a wider knowledge of the world. This is successfully achieved through the rich and varied curriculum that senior leaders have developed. As a result, pupils enjoy regular visits to places of interest and learn from a wide range of visitors who come to the school. Activities offered through the wider curriculum contribute well to their learning. Pupils use these rich experiences in their daily activities. For example, after working with a theatre company, some pupils enjoyed performing short plays to others in an outdoor space during their break. High-quality examples of pupils' work from a range of subjects are displayed around the school, giving pupils a sense of pride and achievement. As a result, pupils are excited by learning and respond to challenges enthusiastically, which contributes well to the progress they make across the curriculum. Parents and carers agree, with one parent saying, 'Every day my children are inspired. They learn and achieve.'

You and your leaders ensure that the school is a nurturing environment where everyone is valued. This contributes effectively to pupils' well-being and to their confidence that adults will help them if they have any concerns. As a result, pupils are courteous and polite and work well with each other.

Leaders and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. However, a lack of clarity around some of the roles and

responsibilities of the leadership team is limiting the impact of the good work that the school is doing. Leaders agreed that work is needed to review some of these roles and responsibilities so that all aspects of the school's work can continue to improve.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of a high quality. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's welfare. Records show that leaders follow up any issues swiftly, working well with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils.

The single central record is maintained to a high standard. Pre-employment checks are carried out in accordance with requirements to ensure that staff and volunteers are suitable to work in the school. These checks are accurately recorded.

Systems to monitor school attendance are effective and staff robustly follow up any pupils who do not attend regularly. As a result, attendance is above the national average.

The pupils I spoke to say they feel safe at this school and all parents who answered Ofsted's online questionnaire agreed. Pupils say that they understand about different sorts of bullying, including online bullying, and that incidents of bullying are rare. However, if it does happen, they say they know they can talk to an adult and it will get dealt with quickly. Pupils are taught how to stay safe in a range of contexts and, as a result, they say they know how to make sensible choices and that helps them stay safe out of school.

Inspection findings

- The first focus of the inspection was to investigate how successfully leaders are supporting teachers to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in reading. This was because, in 2018, there was a dip in progress for disadvantaged pupils in comparison to others nationally.
- You and your leadership team have been quick to identify this and have introduced a number of strategies to improve outcomes for pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. These strategies include focused sessions to develop vocabulary so that pupils can more effectively infer and deduce the meaning of a text. You have also introduced a wider variety of books in order to stimulate interest in reading. As a result, pupils say they enjoy reading more now than they used to.
- Pupils I heard read, including disadvantaged pupils, read with confidence and expression. They say they are developing a love for literature and have opinions about their favourite author, which they are able to justify. For example, one pupil said, 'I like books by David Walliams because the words he chooses are funny.' If they come across a word they do not know, many pupils are able to work out the meaning from the context. However, some disadvantaged pupils find some words more difficult to read and understand than their peers do. This

is limiting their progress. While new strategies are beginning to have an impact, leaders agreed that more work is needed to further develop the vocabulary of disadvantaged pupils.

- For the second key line of enquiry, we focused on how successfully leaders are supporting teachers in improving the achievement of most-able pupils in writing in key stage 1. This was because, in recent years, fewer pupils achieved greater depth than the national average.
- Work in pupils' books shows that you have been successful in developing pupils' neat and fluent handwriting. This enables pupils to routinely present their work well. Teachers typically challenge pupils to be more ambitious in their use of vocabulary. This is having a positive impact on the quality of their writing, with pupils beginning to choose words for their effect on the reader. For example, one pupil wrote, 'Trevor is adorable.'
- Teachers regularly give pupils opportunities to write at length. This enables pupils, particularly most-able pupils, to demonstrate effectively that they are building up their writing skills quickly. For example, the fluency of their writing is improving as their use of punctuation is becoming more accurate over time. As a result, the books show that most-able pupils make strong progress over time.
- The third area we agreed to investigate was how successfully leaders use the curriculum to support deep learning in all subjects. We agreed to investigate this because the information on the school's website suggested that this may be a strength of the school.
- From the review of curriculum plans, the learning environment and displays and work in books, there are many examples of pupils studying a range of subjects. Teachers plan carefully in order to develop skills and knowledge progressively. They choose demanding tasks which enable pupils to produce work of a high standard. Teachers regularly give pupils opportunities to deepen their learning by using and applying what they have learned. For example, some pupils were asked to reflect on how successful a science investigation had been, which resulted in them designing a test that was more effective.
- The school successfully uses the curriculum to motivate pupils to learn. It makes use of the rich environmental and cultural resources of London. Regular opportunities to work with specialists, such as actors from a theatre group, enhance and deepen the learning experiences pupils have. Pupils say they enjoy the opportunities offered by the broader curriculum, such as playing in a brass band and singing in the choir, which recently performed in the Tower of London. As one pupil put it, 'Learning is exciting and the visits help me to understand things better.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the differences between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally in reading diminish through further work to develop their vocabulary

- the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team are reviewed so that all aspects of the school's work can continue to improve.

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

Yours sincerely

David Lloyd
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the school's office manager and the chair and the vice-chair of the governing body. I visited lessons with the assistant headteacher. I reviewed work in pupils' books at key stages 1 and 2, including that of most-able pupils. I listened to pupils from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 read. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school and at playtime. I talked to pupils about their learning and talked to them informally in the playground. I talked with a range of staff. I evaluated a range of documents, including the school's improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation documents and safeguarding records. I considered 22 responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents and 16 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.