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25 June 2019

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Dear Mrs O'Keeffe-Pullan

Short inspection of St Peter's Droitwich CofE Academy

Following my visit to the school on 12 June 2019 with Declan McCauley, Ofsted Inspector, 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in June 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 the deputy headteacher provide strong and effective leadership. Together, you are continually improving the school. You have successfully maintained and built upon the strengths in teaching and learning reported in the last inspection. Your mantra of 'no child left behind' means that all pupils achieve well and thrive. They leave St Peter's well prepared for the next stage in their education.

You lead by example. Many of the parents and carers who spoke to inspectors appreciate your availability each morning as you welcome pupils into school. They are happy with the quality of teaching their children receive, with one parent describing it as 'spot on'. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are positive about the school and most would recommend it to others.

The school is a caring community in which staff value and nurture pupils as individuals. As a result, pupils enjoy school and attend well. From an early age, they become confident learners who are not afraid to 'have a go' and make mistakes. Pupils gain a deep understanding of the school's values and Christian ethos. They embrace the three golden rules of 'We care. We share. We tell the truth.' These rules have a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Pupils are friendly, polite and kind to each other. They work hard in lessons and are keen to do well.

This inspection is the first inspection since the school converted to become an academy. The previous inspection was five years ago and there have been many changes in teaching staff since that time. You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement from that inspection. Teachers have benefited from extensive training to develop their questioning skills. As a result, they routinely ask questions that deepen pupils' understanding and extend their thinking.

You and other leaders make checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning through termly 'pit stops'. Through 'learning discussions', staff are supported to improve and refine their practice. As a result, lessons are purposeful and work matches pupils' abilities well. This supports pupils to make strong progress, although, in some classes, pupils are capable of achieving even more in writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress in the wider curriculum is not as strong as it is in English and mathematics.

The school is part of the Rivers CofE Academy Trust. Leaders, staff and governors work in partnership with other schools in the trust to develop the quality of teaching and improve pupils' outcomes. Through effective monitoring and evaluation, leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. You and the deputy headteacher work alongside middle leaders to develop their skills in making accurate checks on teaching. This is building leadership capacity and laying firm foundations for the school to continue to improve.

Strong governance further enhances leaders' capacity to sustain school improvement. The trust makes regular checks on teaching and learning through half-termly visits to the school. They provide comprehensive training to develop governors' skills. Robust systems of communication and accountability ensure that trustees and governors have a clear and detailed understanding of the school's work. This helps them to ask pertinent questions to support and challenge school leaders and to hold them to account for the school's performance.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders and staff know pupils and their families well. This means that they are alert to signs that might indicate a pupil is at risk of harm. Regular training ensures that staff are confident in how to refer any concerns about pupils' safety or welfare. Leaders take appropriate action in response to the concerns they receive and make referrals to external agencies when necessary. Recording systems enable leaders to build a picture of individual pupils' needs over time so that they can tailor support accordingly.

Relationships between adults and pupils are caring and supportive. As a result, pupils feel safe in school and say that there is an adult they can talk to if something is worrying them. The parents who responded to Parent View unanimously agree that their children feel safe at school. Pupils get along well in lessons and at

breaktimes. Some pupils say that bullying occurs but almost all pupils who shared their views with inspectors say that adults resolve this effectively. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe outside school, for example when using the internet and crossing the road.

Inspection findings

- Effective teaching in the early years ensures that children of all abilities make the progress they should from their starting points, and some children make stronger progress than this. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has been at least in line with the national average for the past three years. In 2018, attainment rose to be above the national average.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the early years provision. Their actions have been successful in developing the teaching of writing and mathematics as well as provision for children's physical development.
- Adults develop children's writing and mathematics skills well. They plan activities carefully to meet children's needs and interests. As a result, children enjoy learning and concentrate for sustained periods of time. Many activities are open-ended and do not place a ceiling on children's learning. For example, during the inspection, children were engrossed in doubling numbers and finding different ways to make 16. One child proudly showed how he knew the answer to double 15 and double 100. Other children doubled single-digit numbers. Another group of children wrote instructions for building the three little pigs' houses. They formed their letters with care and used resources to spell 'tricky' words accurately. The outdoor learning environment is stimulating and well resourced. Children play collaboratively and share resources. Adults skilfully support children's learning by asking questions and developing children's use of vocabulary.
- In key stage 1, leaders make frequent checks on the quality of teaching. They provide detailed feedback to teachers and ensure that any next steps are acted upon. This means that the quality of teaching is developing all the time. Leaders work closely with staff in Years 1 and 2 to make sure that everyone has a shared understanding of the standards pupils should be working at. As a result, teachers plan work that enables pupils to achieve well. In 2018, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 rose to be above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching in English and mathematics in key stages 1 and 2 is effective. Leaders have introduced a new approach to the teaching of reading, which is successful in developing pupils' fluency, understanding of vocabulary and comprehension skills. Pupils enjoy reading and borrow books from the school and local libraries. They can name and talk about favourite authors and texts. In writing, leaders have focused on improving pupils' spelling skills. Work in books shows that pupils' spelling is mostly accurate. Pupils write in sentences of increasing complexity and make effective use of descriptive vocabulary. However, in some classes, teachers do not use assessment information consistently well to challenge pupils to write

at the standard of which they are capable.

- Pupils across the school make good progress in mathematics. This is because teachers have high expectations. They develop pupils' use and understanding of mathematical vocabulary well. Strategies such as the 'enable table' and 'help yourself shelf' develop pupils' independence as well as giving them access to practical resources to support their learning. A concerted focus from leaders means that pupils have increasing opportunities to use their skills to reason mathematically. However, the quality and consistency of these opportunities need further development.
- Leaders have given careful thought to the design of the curriculum and how this meets the needs of pupils at St Peter's. In the early years and Year 1, activities in the forest school help to build pupils' confidence and self-awareness. In key stages 1 and 2, staff use the characters 'Captain Perseverance', 'Super Resilience' and 'Creativity Queen' to encourage pupils to become independent learners who keep going when they find things difficult. This helps pupils to develop the skills and behaviours they need to learn well in different subjects.
- The wider curriculum is interesting and varied. Work in books shows that pupils acquire subject-specific knowledge and skills in subjects such as history, geography and science. They take pride in their work and present it well. However, the school's wider curriculum does not define precisely enough the knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn. Teachers do not plan activities in a sequence that enables pupils to develop a deep enough understanding of the topics they study.
- Visitors to school and annual trips to places of interest enhance the curriculum. There is a range of extra-curricular activities on offer to broaden pupils' experiences in areas such as sport, music and art. Pupils benefit from taking part in enrichment activities with pupils from other schools in the trust, for example termly science days and the upcoming music festival 'Rivers-fest'. They build on their learning at home by completing varied tasks in a range of subjects. Leaders develop pupils' understanding of local, national and world events through weekly updates. This helps to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all teachers use assessment information consistently well to develop pupils' writing skills
- teaching further develops pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics
- learning in the wider curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced to deepen pupils' knowledge in subjects other than English and mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Rivers CofE Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese

of Worcester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Worcestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Claire Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we met with you, the deputy headteacher and other leaders. Discussions were held with the chief executive officer of the Rivers CofE Academy Trust and members of the school improvement board. We observed pupils' learning in all classes. Some of these observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. We looked at pupils' work in a range of books in lessons and with senior leaders. An inspector spoke formally to a group of pupils. We also talked to pupils in lessons and at breaktime and took account of the 52 responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire. An inspector listened to a group of pupils read. We examined a range of school documentation, including the school improvement plan, your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and documents relating to safeguarding. We analysed published and school assessment information to consider pupils' attainment and progress. An inspector spoke to parents at the start of the school day. We considered the 43 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the 33 free-text comments. We took account of the 31 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.