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5 July 2019

Ms Mary Rooney  
Headteacher  
St Margaret Clitherow RC Primary School  
Cole Close  
Thamesmead  
SE28 8GB

Dear Ms Rooney

### **Short inspection of St Margaret Clitherow RC Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 2019, 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 a short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in the earlier short inspection in October 2015.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

The school is an impressive, continually improving and very caring place to learn. Its inclusive and compassionate Christian ethos is very evident.

Under your clear and ambitious leadership, pupils are positively challenged every day. They are well taught and cared for by a very dedicated and effective team of staff. This team will not accept second best or low expectations for anyone. Morale is high. A resolute and determined culture, in a calm and kind atmosphere, pervades the school. Governors also expect highly of the pupils and staff, making a clear contribution to the school's success. Together, you have successfully addressed the next steps recommended at the last short inspection.

Much of pupils' work is highly accomplished. For instance, I saw that pupils in all classes write very proficiently. Their writing is typically accurate, interesting and fit for purpose. Pupils present their work tidily. They use grammar and vocabulary very thoughtfully. Among other examples of the high standards I noted were pupils' scientific knowledge, which was strong throughout the school; and older pupils' singing and musicality, as shown by a difficult piece in two-part harmony which they sung beautifully and accurately.

The teachers who are responsible for all the different subjects feel highly supported by you and other senior leaders. They make a strong, positive contribution to pupils' learning. Their subject action plans and evaluations are thorough and aligned with the school's main improvement plans and evaluations. These guide the work of staff well. However, their focus is on the activities that pupils are given rather than on learning outcomes. This means that there are sometimes gaps in pupils' learning that are not picked up and addressed. In this short visit, I noted some such minor gaps. These were found, for instance, in pupils' practical scientific skills, musical understanding and some aspects of their knowledge in other subjects.

Children make a strong start in the early years. They enjoy a range of well-planned teaching and learning activities. Some children arrive in Nursery and Reception with low attainment in early speech and language. Your team is very adept at meeting these needs and improving the children's key skills swiftly. By the time they leave the Reception class, most children meet or exceed national expectations. Pupils' skills in phonics, reading, writing and mathematics develop very well in key stage 1. Pupils consistently reach notably above average standards in the Year 1 national phonics screening check and in national assessments at the end of Year 2.

The school is happy and serene. You energise pupils through the ready availability of well-organised and interesting resources, well-planned outdoor areas and the stimulating content in the different subjects. Visits out of school and a wide range of well-attended clubs add to this. Staff have clear and positive expectations about behaviour, which pupils usually meet. They are very polite, helpful, friendly and kind. They enjoy school and feel completely secure and confident. Their attendance is above average and there have been no recent exclusions.

Parents, with whom you are working increasingly closely, are understandably happy. A typical comment was, 'The teachers work to very high standards and are very giving to the children... the children's work is always to a very high standard and they are friendly and courteous to others'.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Staff are regularly and thoroughly trained in the school's robust, detailed safeguarding and child protection procedures, which they know and can apply well. Leaders check carefully that no one misses key training. Pupils feel very well protected and safe. There is always a member of staff for them to turn to.

The designated safeguarding leaders are clear in their roles. Their work with external agencies, including the local authority children's services staff, is strong. Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. They know pupils very well and are quick to act to avoid any problems escalating.

Staff make appropriate checks on visitors to the site. Risks are properly assessed, including for pupils' activities online. The school carries out pre-employment checks for staff rigorously, and the single central record is carefully maintained. The purpose of this record is to ensure that adults in the school are suitable to work with children.

## Inspection Findings

- My first line of enquiry focused on the fact that, over a long time, pupils have achieved well in English and mathematics in key stages 1 and 2. I checked if this has continued, particularly for the current Year 6 pupils.
- I found that exacting standards have been maintained and developed. Pupils' learning in mathematics, reading and writing is strong throughout the school. Teaching is clear and purposeful. It is highly valued by pupils and their parents. Year 6 pupils are rightly positive about the teaching they have had over time, and feel ready and confident to transfer to secondary education.
- The second line of enquiry looked at how well the school provides for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This was an issue for action identified as a next step for development at the previous short inspection.
- The provision for pupils with SEND is managed very effectively. You and your staff know these pupils well and their needs are carefully met. In general, the pupils concerned achieve as well as their classmates.
- The third agreed line of enquiry centred on the curriculum and how well it leads pupils to substantial and broad learning across the subjects.
- The curriculum is broad and enticing. Specialist staff in music and physical education contribute well. There is clear evidence of strong learning across subjects throughout the school. Personal, health and social education, for example, is strongly established and successful. Leaders and staff do not, however, consistently make efficient checks on how well pupils are learning in each and every subject.
- Finally, I looked at the effectiveness of the school's provision for pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding.
- These pupils do as well as the others, making substantial progress. They feel very positive about their education and the opportunities they are given. Sometimes these activities involve stimulating visits out of school and joint work with other schools, which usefully broaden pupils' horizons. Generally, the school evaluates its use of pupil premium well, but some parts of the evaluation lack some detail and clarity, particularly in areas where no national data exists.

## Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- their evaluations of pupils' learning in each subject and the impact of pupil premium expenditure are always sharp and precise, so that any gaps or areas for improvement are swiftly remedied.

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

Yours sincerely

Robin Hammerton  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, the deputy headteacher and many members of staff, including those with responsibility for different subjects, teaching assistants and administrators. I scrutinised documents, including some from the school's website, such as the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan. I scrutinised information about pupil premium expenditure, policies and safeguarding documents. I met with pupils from different year groups, but mostly from Year 6. With you, I visited classrooms across all year groups in the school to gather evidence about my key areas of enquiry. I looked at samples of pupils' work. I met with governors, including the chair. I also looked at confidential online questionnaires from 13 members of staff and the views of eight parents who responded on Parent View, which included written comments. I read letters from some parents and spoke to parents informally at the end of the school day.