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9 December 2019

Ms Alison Drayton
St Michael's CofE (Aided) Primary School
The Grove
Flixton
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Dear Ms Drayton

No formal designation inspection of St Michael's CofE (Aided) Primary School

Following my visit with Ofsted Inspector Linda Griffiths to your school on 26 and 27 November 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about aspects of the quality of education.

Evidence

Inspectors reviewed in detail the school's work in reading, mathematics, science and geography. We spoke with leaders, teachers and pupils about the curriculum in these subjects, visited some lessons and reviewed examples of pupils' work. I listened to individual pupils from Year 1, 2 and 3 read to staff. We observed pupils' behaviour and conduct around the school. We spoke with some parents and carers and reviewed 77 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire. I met with a group of pupils to discuss behaviour and attitudes. I met with a group of pupils who hold the roles of members of the school council, prefects, digital leaders and playground leaders. I met with you and a group of staff to discuss provision for pupils' personal development. I met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. I checked a sample of minutes of governors' meetings. I looked at information about pupils' attendance, and leaders' self-evaluation and plans for improving the school. I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. I met with you to discuss safeguarding.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to maintain the high standard of the quality of education identified at the previous inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

The headteacher is new to her role since the previous inspection, taking up her post in 2013. Formerly she was the deputy headteacher at the school. This primary school is average in size. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), or who speak English as additional language or are disadvantaged are below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The school's most recent section 48 inspection of religious education was in January 2018.

Quality of education

Governors and senior leaders have a clear vision that all pupils 'have life and have it to the full'. This is translated superbly through the school's curriculum. Pupils ooze with enthusiasm when learning and building knowledge. They read, grapple with mathematical problems, investigate scientific questions and explore their world, drawing on their deep understanding and skills. Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils. Pupils achieve highly. For instance, in Year 6 pupils' achievement in reading in 2019 was among the highest in the country.

Teachers capture the attention of pupils to learn. They inspire and help them to know and remember more across subjects. From the early years and throughout the school the curriculum in phonics and reading means that pupils read very well. Pupils love books and reading.

Pupils respect people's right to hold different opinions, for example saying, 'all have different opinions' and 'It doesn't matter if you're right or wrong... your opinion is okay.' Older pupils are aware of their curriculum, for instance one pupil said: 'I love mathematics, computing, physical education, geography... It's a really good curriculum because we make different ways of doing it.' Leaders and staff are well informed and enthusiastically share knowledge to assist pupils' learning. Their deep commitment, understanding and intentional, organised approach to arranging the subjects and extra activities for pupils is impressive. It is little wonder that pupils' attendance at the school is high.

Leaders focus on meeting the needs of individual pupils who need greater support, for instance those with SEND or those who are disadvantaged. Leaders are zealous, dedicated and determined to make these pupils' lives better. Staff make sure that

pupils with SEND experience the curriculum fully and succeed in their learning. Staff help all pupils to respect and understand the needs and abilities of people with disabilities in society.

Senior leaders, governors and subject leaders hold a convincing understanding of St Michael's as a strong school that knows what it is doing and why. They do not select quick fixes or overreact but take a thoughtful, planned approach to the curriculum over time, including utilising the contribution of each member of staff.

Pupils who spoke with inspectors showed depth in their learning, in their reading, mathematics, science and geography. They recalled well their previous learning, for instance Year 6 pupils remembered the teaching of the word 'intertwining' from Year 5 and could explain the context of when they encountered this word and what it means. Other pupils who had learned about the migration of birds and animals could recall their past learning in great detail, for example the migration of the Arctic Tern 30,000 kilometres from Shetland in Scotland to Antarctica each autumn.

Leaders and staff plan the curriculum to deliberately teach pupils to respect different opinions, confidently express their own views and to consider in depth age-appropriate questions about life and humanity. For example, 'Is choosing to journey through life as a Christian an easy option? Why? Why not?' Such thought-provoking questions and staff's use of beautiful fiction and non-fiction books in teaching different subjects is enhancing pupils' deep thinking, rich vocabulary and high-quality writing.

Safeguarding

Leaders, governors and staff understand their responsibilities for safeguarding pupils. Staff are vigilant and act on any concerns about pupils' safety and well-being. Leaders link well with outside agencies where needed. Leaders and staff make online safety an important emphasis in the school curriculum, assemblies and wider activities. Some pupils act as 'digital leaders' whose work includes making presentations to families to share online safety tips. Pupils told us that they feel safe at the school. They said that there are several staff with whom they can share their thoughts and feelings.

External support

Senior and subject leaders use the advice and insights of experts from outside of the school with forethought. They want to be challenged about the quality of their work because of their determination to do their absolute best. They make skilful use of training from external organisations and other schools to refine the work of staff at St Michael's.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Manchester, the regional schools commissioner and the director

of children's services for Trafford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tim Vaughan
Her Majesty's Inspector