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Miss Lynn Anderson
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Miss Anderson

Short inspection of Trinity St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 2017, 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 March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school has been through a period of turbulence with many staff leaving over the past 12 months. Since your appointment in September 2016, you have managed the situation admirably well with the effective support of your governing body. Currently, the school is well staffed and led by a strong leadership team that is sharply focused on further improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. As a result, the majority of pupils are making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.

There is a supportive family feel to the school, and pastoral care is a key strength. Most parents are happy with the school and agree that their children are happy, safe and making good progress. In addition, governors and teachers agree that you have made an impressive impact on the school and managed change very well. They agree that you lead by example and consistently model and uphold the school's values.

The previous inspection report identified the need to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics by improving pupils' problem-solving skills using real-life examples. This has been successfully achieved through the introduction of an exciting new curriculum. Pupils use their mathematical skills well when the questions are framed in a real-life context, for example completing a project within the constraints of an allocated budget.

Leaders were also asked to ensure that the high-quality teaching practice that exists within the school was shared among teachers, especially with less experienced colleagues. Sharing of good practice is now an embedded feature of the school's work. For example, the senior leader for mathematics, who is also the mathematics lead professional in the borough, delivers 'gallery' teaching that is observed by other teachers. Teachers are then supported to implement the most effective strategies.

Your leaders have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses based on a sharp analysis of information about pupils' progress. Your school improvement plan is therefore tailored to meet the needs of the pupils. You, your leaders and governors strongly influence its direction by consistently evaluating the progress that is being made towards achieving the targets you have set.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. You and the other designated safeguarding leaders have ensured that training for staff and governors is suitable and timely. Your weekly quiz about safeguarding sustains staff interest and helps to create a culture where safeguarding is always a high priority.

Leaders have robust systems to ensure that pupils are protected. As the key leader with responsibility for safeguarding, you are tenacious in ensuring the most effective support for pupils' emotional and physical well-being. You have arranged for a professional counsellor to work in the school so that pupils may share their thoughts and feelings in a safe environment. In addition, some of the case studies I looked at showed the good impact of leaders' work in ensuring that, over time, some families become less dependent on external support. As a result, in many cases, pupils' barriers to learning have been successfully reduced and rapid progress is being made across the curriculum.

Inspection findings

- In order to confirm that the school remains good, I identified some key lines of enquiry. One of these was about the impact of leaders in improving the outcomes for pupils with average starting points, including disadvantaged pupils, especially in reading and writing. You have rightly identified reading and writing at greater depth in both key stages as a priority for improvement.
- Pupils' progress in reading and writing in key stage 2 was above the national average in 2016. However, the proportion of pupils with average starting points achieving greater depth was below average. You and your leaders are ambitious for more pupils to achieve this standard. For example, you have ensured that pupils' handwriting skills develop at an early stage and pupils are issued with a 'pen licence' only when they have demonstrated the required skills.

- Alongside this, a culture of reading is rapidly being embedded across the school. Some of the pupils I heard reading, which included the most- and least able readers, explained to me the tools they would use to find out about new words and phrases they came across, such as 'scattered his wits' or 'recoil'. You acknowledge that these strategies need to be fully embedded across the school so that more disadvantaged pupils with average starting points achieve greater depth in reading and writing.
- You and your leadership team joined me in examining pupils' books during lessons, with a focus on how well pupils apply their writing skills across different subjects. We found many strengths, for example pupils explaining the steps in their thinking when solving a mathematical problem, or the use of persuasive arguments in the context of science. We agreed however, that pupils need to be given more opportunities to hone their writing skills across a wider range of subjects. This is because the evidence indicated that pupils were not consistently applying skills they had learned in English when writing in other subjects.
- Progress in mathematics in key stage 2 was another of my key lines of enquiry. Pupils make good progress in mathematics at key stage 2 as a result of effective teaching that often challenges pupils to think more deeply about their mathematical understanding. For example, pupils' books demonstrated the application of reasoning skills when they responded to the teacher's statement, 'convince me that 0.8 is the same as eight divided by 10'. In 2016, both the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard and the higher standard in Year 6 in mathematics was above the national average. Pupils' progress in mathematics in key stage 2 was well above the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils with low and average starting points. The school's progress information indicates that current pupils in Year 6 are on track to make the same progress this year, including disadvantaged and the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- A third line of enquiry was about the impact of interventions to improve the outcomes of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because the school has an above-average proportion of pupils in this category and a few did not make sufficient progress in English and mathematics in 2016. Evidence in books demonstrates that these pupils acquire new knowledge and skills very well as they go through the school. Teachers and teaching assistants are adept at identifying and plugging gaps in learning. Targeted interventions in reading and mathematics, for example, are ensuring that these pupils make rapid progress. The quality of teachers' assessment and feedback is also helping these pupils to improve because they are acting on the advice and guidance provided.

- Finally, I looked closely at what you were doing to tackle the low attendance of boys and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You keep a close eye on those pupils who do not attend school regularly or are consistently late. The effective systems for notifying the school of any absences are understood by parents and the firm stance on not taking holidays in term time is clear. As a result of these strategies and effective engagement with parents through the school attendance and punctuality (SAP) meetings, the absence rate for boys and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has declined this year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a higher proportion of pupils with average starting points make strong progress and achieve the higher standard in reading and writing in both key stages
- pupils are given more opportunities to practise and hone their writing skills across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Nasim Butt
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your senior leaders, the chair of governors and three other members of the governing body, your link inspector who represented the local authority, and a group of pupils. Together with you and your leaders, we made short visits to all classes to see samples of lessons and to see pupils at work. I reviewed school documents about self-evaluation and development planning, safeguarding (including the single central record), and information about pupils' attendance. I examined a sample of pupils' books across a range of subjects and spoke with pupils during lessons. I also considered the 12 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents, and the 14 responses from staff.