

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



3 February 2017

Mr Paul Morse
Headteacher
St Peter's RC Primary School
Brentford Avenue
Whitleigh
Plymouth
Devon
PL5 4HD

Dear Mr Morse

Short inspection of St Peter's RC Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 January 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in February 2010.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. This is because you have successfully strengthened leadership capacity at senior and middle levels since your appointment in January 2016. You trust other members of staff to lead aspects of the school's work. This, in turn, heightens the important contribution they make to improving pupils' outcomes.

Leaders know the school and its pupils well. You are aware of the areas for improvement, such as writing at key stage 2, and have set about tackling them swiftly and with vigour. Governors are also keenly aware of what needs to improve in the school. They provide the necessary degree of challenge and support to ensure that leaders stay focused on the key issues. Governors' challenge is informed by performance information and the findings of external advisers. The area adviser for the multi-academy trust of which the school is a part has provided useful support to governors in this respect. As a result, they know the right questions to ask and can evaluate the answers to good effect.

Strong leadership has nurtured a collective responsibility among staff to improve teaching and raise achievement for all pupils. The deputy headteacher and middle leaders create opportunities for staff to share expertise and moderate work externally. Leaders have ensured that staff understand, and can apply, the school's assessment system. This means that pupils' progress is closely tracked so that

needs are understood well, and allows you to target any support that is required. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils, those who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Pupils take advantage of various programmes, alongside the tailored support provided by teaching assistants, to improve their English and mathematical skills. This is helping them to achieve better than in the past.

Pupils in most year groups, regardless of ability or background, make good progress in their different subjects as they move through the school. This is because they are taught well by teachers who use their subject knowledge confidently to prepare interesting, stimulating work. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning as a result because they enjoy the work, are curious to know more and want to improve their work. Pupils not only behave well in lessons but also during breaktimes and around the school site. They are polite and respectful to one another.

Leaders, working through staff, have created a welcoming school. Pupils enjoy their school experience. One pupil I spoke to said, 'the teachers have such a good bond with the pupils.' Parents are also highly supportive of the school's work. All those who responded to the Parent View survey agreed that their child was happy in school, made good progress and was taught well. The overwhelming majority of parents also felt that the school was led well and would recommend the school to others.

At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed on the key lines of enquiry to be considered during the day. These included establishing the effectiveness of actions taken to raise pupils' achievement in different subjects at key stage 2, the effectiveness of actions to reduce absence and exclusions for different groups of pupils, and whether safeguarding is effective. These lines of enquiry are considered below under 'Safeguarding' and 'Inspection findings'.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and the wider staff take their responsibilities for safeguarding seriously. The policies and procedures that inform day-to-day practice are robust and up to date. As a result of receiving the appropriate training, staff are clear about what they should do if they have concerns about pupils. Securely kept referrals and logs are comprehensively detailed and ordered, enabling staff to follow up issues in a timely and effective way. The chair of the governing body also has oversight of safeguarding, which further strengthens its monitoring.

Pupils report that they feel safe. Pupils I spoke to said that there are many staff they would willingly talk to if they had concerns or felt anxious about anything.

Adequate checks are in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Procedures to establish the suitability of staff have become more rigorous to ensure that the school is compliant with current expectations. Multi-academy trust representatives have recently undertaken an audit of safeguarding records. As a result, leaders are ensuring that the records they hold are accurate and complete.

Inspection findings

- Pupils have consistently made good progress over time in reading at key stage 2. In 2016, pupils, including those who were disadvantaged, made progress that was in the top 10% of schools nationally.
- Current pupils are making strong progress across the curriculum, with the exception of Year 3 pupils, who are not yet making the progress expected of them.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are challenged to think more deeply and this encourages them to take an interest in their learning. For example, in mathematics, pupils work through a range of extension tasks that become increasingly difficult. They start with 'Do it' tasks and move on to 'Think it', 'Explain it' and 'Solve it' tasks. These tasks test and develop pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Year 6 pupils who left the school in 2016 did not make sufficient progress in writing. Leaders have swiftly taken action to ensure that current pupils acquire the necessary writing skills to make the progress expected of them. Pupils' progress is being carefully tracked to identify and remedy weaknesses. Additionally, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly in Year 3, are being provided with the necessary support to boost their progress.
- Pupils are being provided with more opportunities to write at length and for different purposes and audiences. Furthermore, pupils' writing is being celebrated in learning displays to model good practice and show other pupils how much fun writing can be.
- Attendance for pupils overall is improving and has been higher than the national average for the last two years. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, although not yet in line with averages, is improving. This is because staff work closely with the parent support adviser and the education welfare officer to take prompt action when pupils are absent from school. For example, phone calls are made to parents when staff are first alerted to absence. In the past, the parent support adviser has led a 'walking bus', collecting absent local pupils from their homes.
- There have been no exclusions in the 2016/17 academic year, which is an improvement on previous years. This is because staff carefully manage behaviour and work with parents, outside agencies and other schools to prevent exclusions.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- writing at key stage 2 continues to be closely monitored, and support provided, in order to ensure that pupils make the progress of which they are capable
- action is taken to ensure that Year 3 pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make the progress of which they are capable in all of their subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke to you and your deputy headteacher, pupils, representatives of the governing body and the area adviser.

You, your deputy headteacher and I made visits to lessons to observe pupils' attitudes to learning. The work in pupils' books was also scrutinised.

A range of documentary evidence was considered, which included the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, current progress information, and attendance and exclusion information. I also considered staff employment files, safeguarding referrals and child protection records.

In addition, I took account of 27 responses to the Parent View online survey and 20 responses to the staff survey issued during the inspection.