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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mr Clive Hale
Headteacher
St Paul's Church of England Primary School
Elsworthy Road
Primrose Hill
London
NW3 3DS

Dear Mr Hale

Short inspection of St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 October 2016, 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 December 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since your appointment as headteacher in September 2016, you have already reviewed the school's improvement plan. You have used the knowledge and experience of your governors and deputy headteacher to make sure school improvement planning is based on a detailed analysis of the school's performance information. You, your deputy, colleagues and governors all have a very clear understanding of the strengths of the school. Collectively, you are taking swift action to bring about improvements where they are needed.

Successive leaders, ably supported by your experienced deputy and governing body, have successfully addressed the two areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection and the actions to be addressed from the subsequent monitoring inspection in January this year.

At the previous inspection, inspectors identified that whole-class teaching needed to be suitably challenging to meet the needs of all pupils. Leaders have ensured that teachers now typically use information about pupils' progress to support their planning. As a result of increased challenge and more effectively targeted activities, pupils learn well and outcomes remain high. Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, are making good progress across the school. Work in current pupils' books and unvalidated 2016 assessment information show that pupils are

continuing to achieve well. Proportions of pupils achieving a high standard are above the national averages.

Governors are ambitious for the school. They have developed their expertise and skills, which was an identified area of improvement at the time of the last inspection. They take their roles and responsibilities seriously, as demonstrated by their insistence on appointing the right headteacher. Governors receive excellent training and support from both the diocese and local authority, enabling them to execute their duties conscientiously and well. Capacity within the governing body to drive further school improvement is now good. However, governors are aware that, on occasions, they are unable to check which actions are having the greatest impact on pupils' achievement. This is because current action planning does not always have clear, measurable milestones, with appropriately identified completion times.

Attendance is above average and has remained so since the last inspection. The parents and pupils I spoke to were wholly appreciative of the dedicated and approachable staff.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding records held by the school are clear and appropriately stored. Governors and staff are aware of the latest statutory safeguarding guidance. They work closely with experts in safeguarding from the diocese and local authority. As a result, all areas identified for improvement at the last section 8 inspection in January 2016 have been addressed. Governors make sure the school's safeguarding policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and followed consistently. Staff and governors undertake regular and up-to-date safeguarding training. Consequently, they know how to identify risk and promote the safety of all pupils. Governors are now fully aware of, and understand, their responsibilities regarding the 'Prevent' duty. Governors and the leadership team ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Inspection findings

- Governors execute their duties conscientiously. They have reconstituted the governing body and meet monthly to review the different aspects of the school's provision. Targeted training sessions from the diocese and local authority, along with commissioned reviews and their regular visits to the school, enable governors to test leaders' self-evaluation information. They scrutinise the information they receive with rigour and utilise their link roles with staff well. Consequently, all governors have a detailed knowledge of the school and are clear about future actions. However, they are aware that current action planning needs refining to ensure that all future actions have clear, measurable milestones linked to them, with identified completion times, so that success can be better measured against pupils' achievement.
- Governors have made links with another governing body as they continue to explore further options to ensure strong leadership succession for the school.

Even though this is taking longer than they would have liked, they are committed to supporting the school's continued improvement and were instrumental in securing your appointment for the current year.

- Staff and governors have worked together to review the school's values and ensure that they promote British values and the school's Christian ethos. Since the inspection in January, governors have reviewed the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum fully, to check that it supports pupils' understanding of risks and how to keep themselves safe.
- PSHE books show that pupils have already learned a range of important lessons about democracy. Practical learning experiences have included meeting their local mayor and writing manifestos. Teaching about safety is highlighted in this revised curriculum. Pupils' understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet and technology is strong. They are learning how to be safe when out and about, through road safety workshops. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves healthy through their dietary choices. However, it is still too early to assess the full impact of this new curriculum in raising pupils' awareness of a wider range of risks, such as those associated with extremism, gangs or stereotyping. You recognise the need to monitor this closely.
- Senior leaders have ensured increasing levels of challenge for pupils. Effective professional development and coaching support from leaders results in well-planned lessons that capture pupils' interests and enthusiasm. A clear focus on identifying what a pupil needs to achieve next, along with skilful questioning, is contributing to the good and sometimes rapid progress pupils make, particularly in reading and mathematics. By the time they leave the school, all pupil groups, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able, are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Reading is a particular strength and pupils make rapid progress across the school. Pupils develop a love of books. Most-able pupils read fluently and with expression. Less-able pupils are supported well in learning phonic skills and 'tricky' words. They use this knowledge effectively when reading unfamiliar texts.
- Leaders rightly picked up that disadvantaged children in the early years were not making the same rapid progress as those in the rest of the school. For the last two years, by the end of the Reception Year, differences remained in the achievement of disadvantaged children when compared with other children nationally. Staff have used assessments well to inform their planning and are using the pupil premium funding to good effect. Funding has been spent on providing small group activities to support talk, reading and communication development, including specific training for staff on how to deliver this targeted teaching. As a result, for the last three years the difference in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in the early years and those nationally has diminished. Provisional results indicate that proportions of disadvantaged pupils in the early years achieving a good level of development will be at least in line with, or above, those children nationally.
- Teachers use the school's assessment and marking policy well. Pupils make good progress in lessons because teachers assess their work effectively and feedback is often very helpful. In writing, pupils' progress in the technical

skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling is secure. However, teachers do not offer strong enough guidance to pupils on the purpose, organisation and effect of their writing across all areas of the curriculum. You are aware that 'mastery' in writing needs further focus if pupils are to make the same rapid gains as those seen in mathematics and reading. Occasionally, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils should achieve when using different forms of reporting and writing across the curriculum. Consequently, these cross-curricular activities do not sufficiently challenge pupils to improve the purpose, organisation and effectiveness of their writing further.

- Senior leaders have established strong systems for assessing pupils' strengths and areas for development, and for tracking progress against the national curriculum. Class teachers and leaders discuss pupils' progress and achievement regularly, and teaching staff co-review pupils' learning in books. With the help of the local authority you are continuing to build on this in school practice and develop cross-school moderation further. New links have been brokered with an outstanding school and a national leader of education. You plan more cross-moderation experiences to support staff in raising standards of pupils' writing further, particularly when writing in different subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- action planning, including plans for monitoring the new PSHE curriculum, includes specific outcomes, responsibilities and timescales, so governors can check the impact of these actions further
- pupils receive clear guidance to further improve their writing across all areas of the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Jean Thwaites
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We agreed to prioritise the following areas with the school at the start of the inspection:

- how governors have enhanced their skills to secure improvements in pupils' achievement
- how effectively leaders have used the pupil premium funding in the early years
- how leaders have ensured challenge for all pupils, particularly in writing
- how leaders have ensured that the curriculum supports pupils' understanding of risks and how to keep themselves safe
- the effectiveness of safeguarding.

The following activities were carried out to explore these areas during the inspection. During the visit, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, a group of subject and senior leaders, and the school business manager. I also met with representatives from the diocese and the local authority, and four governors, including both vice chairs of the governing body. In his absence due to a prior work commitment abroad, a letter from the chair of the governing body was also considered. I spoke informally to staff during the day, and to parents as they arrived at the school or at the breakfast club provision earlier in the day. The 45 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View), and comments received electronically or by email from 25 parents, were taken into account. The five replies to the staff survey were considered. We visited classes together to observe teaching and look at pupils' work. I spoke informally to pupils in the breakfast club, met with a group of pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 and heard pupils read. I also reviewed a range of school documentation, including records of your checks to safeguard children. Leaders' own evaluations of the school's performance and records of pupils' achievement were also taken into account.