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26 February 2018

Miss Marie Heraty
Headteacher
St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Langleybury
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Dear Miss Heraty

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

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 2018, 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 September 2013.

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 is a welcoming and caring place where pupils thrive. The engaging curriculum captures pupils' interest and enables effective learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school, work hard and achieve well. They and their parents and carers value the opportunities and support the school provides.

Since taking on the role of headteacher last summer, you have placed renewed emphasis on moving the school to the next level of effectiveness. Priorities for improvement are sharp. Previous work to improve the engagement of boys means that they now typically make the same strong progress as girls. However, you have rightly identified that the most able pupils could be stretched even more, particularly in writing. Work to bring this about is starting to bear fruit. Leaders' work to clarify expectations for pupils' achievement in each year in science and in foundation subjects is also well considered. This is helping leaders gain a deeper insight into the quality of curriculum planning and identify areas for further attention.

Governors have responded to the recommendation made in the last inspection relating to improving the school's governance. Their regular visits are now clearly focused on the school's improvement priorities. This helps to ensure that the governing body has a clearer understanding of the actions under way to improve the school. Governors acknowledge that their understanding of the effectiveness of

this work is not routinely incisive enough to hold leaders consistently tightly to account.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Checks on the suitability of staff are sound. Staff are fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and are alert to any sign that a child may need help or protection. Staff know how and when to pass on concerns to you in your role as leader for safeguarding. You make sure that suitable support is in place for pupils who are vulnerable or may be at risk. Your introduction of a weekly staff briefing about pupils needing extra care and support has further heightened the focus on meeting these pupils' needs. When necessary, you work well with other agencies such as social care and health services to ensure effective support for pupils and their families. Governors make sure that safeguarding arrangements are sound through regular auditing, spot checks and discussions with staff and pupils.

Pupils, parents and staff are clear that the school is a safe place. Bullying is very rare and when it does occur it is dealt with well. The curriculum helps pupils learn how to keep safe online and in the world around them.

Inspection findings

- The most able pupils achieve well in English and mathematics. However, their progress is not consistently as strong as that of pupils of average ability. This is particularly the case in writing at key stage 2. Since the autumn, you and your new deputy headteacher have rightly made securing outstanding progress for the most able pupils a key priority. In several year groups, a high proportion of these pupils are now making very strong progress. However, this is not yet consistently the case across the school.
- Subjects other than English and mathematics, taught together in topics, form the school's 'creative curriculum'. This curriculum engages pupils' interest and promotes effective learning in most subjects. Nevertheless, leaders recognise that topic plans do not consistently enable pupils to acquire deep learning in each subject as they progress through the school.
- Leaders' work to define expectations for pupils' achievement and develop assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics is proving useful. However, this work is at a relatively early stage. Consequently, subject leaders' understanding of the effectiveness of teaching in the subjects they are responsible for is not consistently incisive.
- Governors keep abreast of school developments. They have a clear understanding of the school's improvement priorities and of work under way to meet these. The governing body has made sure that it has the skills to carry out its role effectively. Governors maintain a clear understanding of key aspects of the school's performance, including pupils' achievement in English and mathematics. Their understanding of the impact of the rest of the curriculum on

pupils' achievement and wider development is not as incisive. Consequently, governors are not well placed to hold leaders fully to account for the quality of the entire curriculum.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils routinely receive the challenge they need to gain deep learning and a high level of skill across the subjects they study
- planning, assessment and monitoring procedures consistently support and lead to outstanding teaching across the curriculum
- governors gain an incisive understanding of the impact of the whole curriculum, so they can routinely hold leaders to account for every aspect of the school's performance.

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

Yours sincerely

Diana Choulerton
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the deputy headteacher at the start of the day. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and agreed the key areas we would focus on during the inspection. During the day, I held further discussions with you and the deputy headteacher. I made short visits to lessons with you to look at pupils' learning in writing and the wider curriculum. We also jointly scrutinised a selection of pupils' work. I met with the vice-chair and two other members of the governing body. I also met with a group of subject leaders. I took account of 14 staff survey responses and 161 responses to the pupil survey. I also took account of 87 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 57 free-text responses. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' checks on pupils' progress and safeguarding policies and procedures.