

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



17 January 2019

Mrs Lisa Jeffery
Principal
St Peter's Church of England Academy
Mountbatten Way
Raunds
Wellingborough
Northamptonshire
NN9 6PA

Dear Mrs Jeffery

Short inspection of St Peter's Church of England Academy

Following my visit to the school on 9 January 2019, 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 May 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The trust has ensured that effective leadership arrangements are in place so that the school continues to improve. Leaders and other staff ensure that the school has a positive, supportive ethos in which pupils can thrive and develop as individuals. The school is a calm, orderly, well-organised place to learn. Teaching is effective. Current pupils' work and school information show that the majority of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and other subjects.

At the start of the inspection, we agreed the key lines of enquiry that I would investigate to test whether the school remains good. At the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers check pupils' progress and support their learning more effectively. We observed teachers providing pupils with advice and guidance during lessons, and teaching assistants are often skilled in this respect. This supports pupils' learning well. Leaders were also asked to ensure the most able pupils were given appropriately challenging work to enable them to reach the higher standards. This has been partially achieved. At the end of 2018, the proportions of pupils achieving the higher levels were close to the national average for reading but below average for writing and mathematics. Teachers ask pupils to complete more challenging work in these subjects. School information and pupils' work show overall that the proportions of pupils working at the higher levels are improving, particularly in mathematics. However, some inconsistencies remain. In some areas of learning, for example the accuracy of

pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation, teachers sometimes do not have appropriately high expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Leaders were asked to ensure that pupils present their work tidily and use a handwriting style in line with the school's policy. Handwriting and presentation are improving throughout the school and pupils take increasing pride in their work. I explored with you and the deputy principal actions taken to improve standards in reading. In 2018, pupils' progress in reading was lower than that in writing and mathematics, and the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard was below the national average. Leaders and other staff are developing a range of initiatives to improve standards in reading, particularly developing pupils' inference and deduction skills. Pupils greatly value their 'planners' in which they record the books they are reading. Teachers help pupils make links between their reading and writing skills. School information and inspection evidence show that teaching enables the majority of pupils throughout the school to make good progress. However, some pupils, particularly the least able, are not as secure as they could be in their phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) and early reading skills.

Leaders were also asked to provide subject leaders with opportunities to check the quality of provision and use the information they gain to improve teaching and learning. This objective has been partially achieved. There is considerable expertise in the school and leaders ensure that new subject leaders are given appropriate training to develop the effectiveness of their roles. Leaders and subject leaders check standards regularly and, as a result of their work, progress has been made in addressing all the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. However, improvement has not been as effective as it could be in some areas. Leaders' plans for improvement are not as sharply focused as they could be to better hold staff to account. Leaders do not use their findings as well as they could to ensure that all staff are fully implementing their initiatives.

Pupils are very well behaved. They are friendly and courteous at all times of the school day. They listen well, concentrate, are keen to contribute in lessons and apply themselves to all that is asked of them. Pupils understand the importance of treating each other with respect. They are proud of their appearance and enjoy coming to school, learning and school life. Teachers praise pupils' work and efforts, and pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. Parents spoke of the friendly and approachable staff and the positive gains their children are making in their learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a secure culture of safeguarding. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding requirements are fit for purpose. Staff receive regular training in child protection, including in relation to the government's 'Prevent' duty. The school's record of recruitment checks is thorough. Leaders take timely action when they have any concerns about pupils' welfare and well-being. School systems for recording concerns are thorough.

Pupils say they are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They say bullying is rare. They learn about different types of bullying and the majority are confident that staff will rapidly resolve any concerns they may have.

Inspection findings

- Our observations of teaching and learning across the school showed that teachers are positive, enthusiastic and engage pupils' interest. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan lessons which build effectively on pupils' previous learning. Teaching assistants are often highly effective in supporting pupils' learning.
- Pupils' work shows the positive impact of leaders and the work of other staff to develop a 'mastery' approach to the teaching and learning of mathematics. Teachers ensure that pupils become fluent in their understanding of mathematical concepts by linking different aspects of mathematics and using visual imagery well. Pupils are taught to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills well, and complete work which is challenging. Pupils make good progress in mathematics.
- Subject leaders are redesigning the curriculum so that it is more engaging and better supports pupils' learning. This was illustrated when pupils explained enthusiastically to me how, during a recent 'wow' day, a tractor had been brought into the school grounds as part of work to help pupils understand farming and agriculture. This project combined aspects of information and communication technology, design and technology, mathematics, writing and other areas of the curriculum effectively.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas in which it needs to improve. They are carrying out a range of actions and developing initiatives to further improve standards. However, their improvement plans, including for the use of the pupil premium, are not as sharply focused as they could be. They do not make clear enough the impact leaders and those responsible for governance wish to see to enable more effective and rapid improvements to the progress and attainment of different groups of pupils.
- Our scrutiny of pupils' writing showed that pupils often complete work of a high standard and show increasing perseverance in their work. The majority of pupils are taught to take pride in their work. Overall, pupils make good progress. However, sometimes the strong content of pupils' work is let down by weaker spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about reading. Staff encourage pupils to read at home and reward pupils for reading regularly. Reading is celebrated throughout the school. Structured guided reading lessons and consistent whole-school initiatives promote pupils' comprehension skills well. Leaders have ensured that staff have received phonics training and support pupils who need extra help. However, some pupils, particularly the least able, are still not as secure as they should be in using and applying their phonics and early reading skills.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- their plans for improvement are more sharply focused to better hold staff to account
- they check that all staff apply their initiatives
- all teachers have high expectations of the accuracy of pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling
- pupils, particularly the least able, are secure in their phonics and early reading skills.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer, the director of education for the Diocese of Peterborough, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Lawson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the deputy principal, subject leaders, members of the local governing body, the chief executive officer and the director of primary education for the Nene Education Trust. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the day. I met with pupils informally during the school day, as well as holding a formal meeting with a group of pupils. I listened to pupils reading. Together, you, I and the deputy principal observed teaching and learning in seven lessons. During these visits, I looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils to evaluate the quality of their learning. I also examined with you, the deputy principal and a senior leader, pupils' work in a sample of their books.

During the inspection, I scrutinised a variety of documents including those relating to safeguarding; behaviour; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; pupils' attainment and progress; staff performance and the school's self-evaluation document and plans for improvement. I assessed the impact on standards of leaders' actions taken since the last inspection, as well as additional lines of enquiry. I looked at the range and quality of information provided on the school's website. I considered the 22 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the 13 responses to the staff questionnaire and 43 responses to the pupil questionnaire.