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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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29 January 2018

Mr Carl Thornton
Headteacher
St Paul's CofE Primary School
Wiclif Way
Stockingford
Nuneaton
Warwickshire
CV10 8NH

Dear Mr Thornton

Short inspection of St Paul's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 January 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 October 2013.

This school continues to be good.

Leaders and managers, including governors, have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. You have used this well to take informed action to improve the school and maintain the good standard of education that you provide. Leaders have ensured that the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed.

Staff work well together within an ambitious culture. There is strong teaching in every year group and most pupils make good progress in a range of subjects across the school.

The most able pupils are consistently challenged to make strong progress across the curriculum. Additionally, staff ensure that pupils make appropriate choices about the difficulty of task that they select when they are given this option. As a result, middle-ability pupils, and particularly the most able pupils, attain high standards. However, the progress made by low-prior-attaining pupils does not match that of others in the school.

Teachers give feedback in line with the school's assessment policy and marking in mathematics and English is equally effective. Consequently, pupils are always clear about what they need to do to improve their work.

Subject leadership is effective and literacy and numeracy development is embedded across the curriculum. The promotion of spiritual, moral and social

development is strong and fundamental British values are promoted well within the Christian ethos of the school. Pupils learn about all the major religions and they have visited many different places of worship. Pupils are tolerant, respectful and honest. They have a clear understanding of democracy and right and wrong.

Learning in the classroom is enriched by a range of other opportunities. These include trips and visits, sport and exercise, outdoor activities, including forest schools, choir and sessions led by visitors.

Pupils are proud of their school and keen to take on responsibilities. Some lead worship and others lead play activities. There is an active school council and older pupils are happy to help younger ones. This happens as a matter of course but opportunities such as Year 5 boys reading with Year 2 boys help develop a sense of responsibility while addressing one of the school's priorities.

Leaders have correctly identified improving outcomes in phonics and reading, particularly for boys, as a key area for development. The library has been improved, a reading for pleasure team has been established and effective interventions are in place to help those who need to catch-up. The Shakespeare intervention programme is having a marked impact on improving the reading of disadvantaged boys.

Leaders have also correctly identified improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils as a key priority. The difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils narrowed last year but a gap remains. Consequently, staff have been given further training to improve their practice and they are taking action to fully engage with parents. Additional interventions are in place and disadvantaged pupils benefit from targeted enrichment activities. As a result, the most able disadvantaged pupils continue to make strong progress and the progress of other groups continues to improve.

Overall, pupils made similar progress to the national average in reading and mathematics and strong progress in writing in 2016 and 2017. However, as the progress made by boys in writing did not match that of girls; leaders are taking further action to improve the standard of boys' writing.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and considerate and they value the rewards that they are given in school. Inappropriate behaviour is rare and sanctions are needed infrequently. There have been no permanent exclusions since the last inspections and very few fixed-term exclusions.

Most pupils have excellent attendance but the proportions of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities who are absent are higher than those of other pupils. Additionally, the way that leaders analyse behaviour and attendance is not fully developed.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are clear about their responsibilities and know what to do if they have a concern. There is a strong culture for keeping children safe throughout the school.

Staff are well trained and diligent. Processes are robust and concerns are followed up appropriately. Referrals are timely and outside agencies are used effectively.

Procedures to recruit, select and check staff are thorough and the school's single central record is compliant. Appropriate checks are in place for visitors and the site is secure.

Pupils are taught to stay safe in an age-appropriate way. They learn about online safety and the 'e-cadets' take a lead on promoting e-safety to other pupils and parents. Pupils feel safe and staff and parents believe that pupils are safe in the school.

Pupils and parents raised no concerns about bullying. They were confident that staff would deal with it quickly and appropriately should it happen.

Inspection findings

- There is strong teaching in every year group. Pupils and staff work well together in a positive learning environment. Displays are used effectively to celebrate pupils' achievements and aid learning. Teaching assistants are well deployed and purposeful interventions accelerate the progress made by targeted pupils.
- Coaching and training are used to help staff improve their practice but not all teaching is of the highest standard. Leaders have correctly identified improving the quality of teaching further as a key priority for the school.
- Low-prior-attaining pupils are beginning to make improved progress and they made faster progress than the national average in mathematics in 2017. However, leaders have not analysed the progress made by this group of pupils closely in the past and their progress has been slower than other pupils in the school.
- Leaders have taken effective action to improve progress in reading and phonics. Activities such as 'drop everything and read' are raising the profile of reading in the school and effective interventions are ensuring that almost all pupils reach the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 2. However, boys still do not achieve as well as girls in reading and phonics.
- Similarly, effective strategies, such as a focus upon developing fine motor skills, are improving boys' writing skills. However, although improving, the overall quality of boys' writing does not match that produced by girls in the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to other pupils and the most able

disadvantaged pupils achieve high levels of attainment. However, although the overall difference in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others is diminishing, this group of pupils is not making fast enough progress to close the attainment gap.

- Most pupils attend regularly but a small number of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are absent too often.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching consistently matches the best that can be found in the school
- systems and practice to improve outcomes for low-prior-attaining pupils are fully developed so that this group of pupils makes faster progress
- effective action is taken to further improve the quality of boys' reading and writing
- further action is taken to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils
- effective action is taken to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities attend regularly.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Mosley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, other leaders, staff and four members of the governing body. Sixty responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.

Short visits were made to every classroom and three pupils took the inspector on a tour of the school site. Seventy-four responses to the pupil questionnaire were considered and the inspector spoke to pupils formally and informally. Behaviour was observed at the start of the day, in lessons and during social time.

The inspector considered 222 responses and 15 free-text comments on Parent View. Parents were spoken to at the start of the day and a telephone conversation took place with another parent.

Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety. Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and the inspector looked at published information on the school's website.