

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Susan Johnson  
Headteacher  
SS Peter and Paul's Catholic Primary School  
Gordon Road  
Ilford  
Essex  
IG1 1SA

Dear Mrs Johnson

### **Short inspection of SS Peter and Paul's Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 17 May 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 July 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

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

You and your senior leaders have created a warm, nurturing and creative learning environment that welcomes children from all cultures, faiths and backgrounds. You, staff and pupils are very proud of the school's faith ethos and its status as a silver 'Rights Respecting School'. Consequently, everyone's spiritual development, and everyone's social and emotional well-being, are of the highest priority. You have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and detailed plans to tackle areas that do not currently meet your very high expectations.

You are highly aspirational for the pupils in your care and determined to help every child reach their full potential. Many pupils join the school throughout the year, some at the very early stages of learning English. You have established effective systems to ascertain quickly each child's social and emotional needs, plus their academic ability, so that you can provide them with bespoke support. Consequently, all pupils make good progress irrespective of their starting points.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and the vast majority attend regularly. They were keen to tell the inspector about the wide range of opportunities available to them. They mentioned in particular singing in the school choir at the Royal Albert Hall, participating in dance and sports activities at lunchtime, learning an instrument or tending the school's resident chickens. Pupils are keen to celebrate each other's differences, backgrounds and faiths. They mix well and show respect and tolerance

towards each other. In lessons, they are genuinely interested in their studies and work hard. The pupil leadership team and the school council ensure that pupils have a say in the quality of their education and the events and activities on offer. Parents are complimentary about the culture you have created. As one parent said: 'It is a shining example of how faith schools should be run, with a sense of harmony for all pupils, irrespective of their religious backgrounds.'

Governors are very proud of the school and highly committed to supporting you in your endeavours. They carefully consider the information you provide and, where appropriate, ask for further clarification. Governors involve themselves fully in the life of the school and value the views of parents and carers. They take their statutory responsibilities very seriously and ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective.

You have addressed effectively the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. Pupils' work shows that they routinely receive helpful advice and guidance from their teachers on how to improve. Often, they are challenged to attempt another task or revise their work, which they do enthusiastically. New leadership in early years has resulted in an overhaul of the provision and substantial improvements. Accurate assessments of children's starting points mean that teachers plan appropriate activities that encourage children to be curious and active learners. As a result, children in the early years make consistently good progress in preparation for Year 1. You have made significant improvements to the outdoor area in key stage 1 and have plans to do the same in the early years foundation stage.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your leadership team have established a robust safeguarding culture across the school. Every member of staff understands their statutory responsibility to keep children safe. You know the potential risks for your pupils. These include radicalisation, female genital mutilation, physical chastisement by parents, poverty and mental health. Consequently, you have ensured that all staff are well trained and vigilant in identifying signs that might indicate that a child is at risk. Systems for recording this information are highly effective and you have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You work well with external agencies and are resolute in your determination to find early and appropriate help for pupils and their families. Checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are in line with current guidelines.

Pupils are clear that staff keep them safe and offer them appropriate guidance and support. When asked whether pupils are ever unkind to each other, one boy said: 'Of course not, we are a rights respecting school.' Pupils spoke of helpful advice they had received about road safety, protecting themselves while away from school and staying safe online. Pupils have highly positive relationships with school staff. They were clear about which adults they could talk to should they have any worries or concerns. The large school site is safe and well maintained.

## Inspection findings

- You have prioritised the teaching of reading across the school. This is because, in 2017, Year 6 pupils made less progress in reading than in writing. You have recently invested heavily in a purpose-built learning resource centre and employed a librarian to encourage a love of reading across all key stages. You have purchased a range of high-quality texts to engage young readers and broaden their understanding of the wider curriculum.
- At key stage 2, you and your leaders identified that some pupils' skills in comprehension, inference and deduction needed to be strengthened, using increasingly complex texts. Focused daily reading sessions support pupils to read for meaning across a range of subjects. Reading records encourage pupils to read at home with an adult, and staff invest time in hearing pupils read individually in school. As a result, pupils are now making good progress in their reading across key stage 2.
- Children in the early years and key stage 1 have a daily diet rich in stories, rhymes and songs. Classrooms are full of eye-catching and enjoyable books, which lead to focused learning activities. Twice daily, story time encourages children to listen carefully, follow the narrative and engage with the characters. For instance, children in Nursery talked about how they enjoy reading the 'Hungry Caterpillar', demonstrated how they match different butterfly cards and showed me their live butterfly enclosure. Parents are encouraged to read daily with their children and school staff ensure that, each day, children have a one-to-one reading experience. Children are also encouraged to practise their fine motor skills and quickly learn to write their names and short sentences.
- The teaching of phonics is effective throughout early years and key stage 1. Staff are well trained, knowledgeable and confident. You group pupils according to their phonics knowledge and, consequently, they practise reading sounds and words suitable for their level of understanding. The sessions are fast-paced, fun and enjoyable, with pupils consolidating learned skills and confidently practising their sight-reading, segmenting and blending. Pupils use their knowledge of phonics to practise writing for a range of audiences and purposes. Pupils borrow books, linked to their reading ability, to practise reading at home. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 has improved from below to above average.
- You carefully and accurately track the progress of all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language or who are vulnerable. Regular progress meetings are held to ensure that any barriers to learning are addressed and that resources are directed appropriately. In this way, you offer bespoke and effective support to individual pupils and their families. However, you accept that your evaluation of the impact of some initiatives, especially those funded using pupil premium funding, could be sharper. This would enable governors to have a clearer understanding of how this funding is spent and the impact.

- You and your leadership team have also begun to review the teaching of mathematics across the school to ensure that it is of a consistently high quality. At key stage 2, targeted groups, including the most able pupils, receive extra sessions to challenge and stretch their numeracy skills. You have purchased software to give pupils access to extra mathematics help at home and encourage them to attempt complex tasks. You have provided further training to ensure that staff utilise the range of mathematical resources available and are confident in teaching complex reasoning. You acknowledge, however, that the teaching of mathematics across the school needs further strategic direction, particularly with regard to the teaching of problem-solving and reasoning.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they take a more strategic approach when evaluating interventions and initiatives, especially those using pupil premium funding, to ensure that they have the desired impact on pupils' progress
- they reflect on the current provision in mathematics to ensure that opportunities for problem-solving and reasoning are taught more consistently across the school
- plans for the outdoor area in the early years foundation stage are completed.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Matthews  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher to discuss the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. I held meetings with the chair of the governing body and with a representative from the local authority. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including referrals to external agencies, and the register of safeguarding checks made on staff prior to their appointment. I visited classrooms with you and also with the head of early years, to gather evidence on pupils' and children's progress and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. I looked at a range of pupils' work. I met with the special educational needs coordinator as well as the English and mathematics leads. I spoke to staff and pupils during informal times and in classrooms. I met with the pupil leadership team. I listened to pupils reading during phonics sessions and reciprocal reading lessons. I took account of the 23 written responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View and the 36 responses to the staff questionnaire. No pupils completed the online survey.