

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



9 February 2016

Mrs P Kelleher
Acting Headteacher
St Peter's RC Primary School
Kirkway
Middleton
Manchester
M24 1FL

Dear Mrs Kelleher

Short inspection of St Peter's RC Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 January 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 July 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, colleagues and governors have maintained the standard of education despite an unusual number of staffing changes during the last year. Experienced leaders and staff are working hard to make sure that new members of staff are quickly brought up to speed with your expectations. Some parents have shared their concerns about staffing changes and the uncertainty that these can bring. However, the vast majority of parents fully appreciate that this has been an unavoidable challenging time for the school and are thankful and appreciative of your work to try to maintain consistency.

What hasn't changed during this period is the warm and inclusive ethos which was a strength at your previous inspection. Pupils are happy, feel safe and enjoy their time at St Peter's. Strong relationships between staff and pupils ensure that pupils are well looked after and are ready to learn. Pupils' attitudes to learning, in every class we visited, were consistently positive.

The previous inspection identified that children in the early years should be making more progress. A key factor in your successful improvement of this area has been the appointment of an effective and experienced leader. She is leading by example and is sharing her skills and knowledge of best methods for this key stage and with other staff. Children are now making better progress because activities are planned more sharply to allow children to practise those skills which they have not yet

mastered. Children are also set weekly challenges to make sure they fully complete tasks and learn how to persevere with their learning.

Progress has also been made in other areas for improvement. Work in pupils' books shows that in the vast majority of cases, pupils complete tasks which are well matched to their abilities. Middle leaders are now well equipped to support ongoing improvement within their subjects because they have a clear understanding and overview of standards and are more involved in the monitoring of teaching. Teachers follow the agreed policy for marking across the school, but we discussed how some of the marking comments could be tweaked to provide pupils with clearer guidance for ongoing improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have completed training, based on the most recent legislation, along with another senior leader. Staff are aware of their responsibilities to help keep pupils safe because they also receive timely training. Along with governors, you ensure that all necessary checks are completed on new members of staff before they start to work at the school. Pupils all say that they feel safe in school and parents agree. Pupils say that bullying never happens and would be confident that it would be quickly dealt with if it did. They have a strong understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying.

Inspection findings

- St Peter's is a warm and welcoming school in which pupils feel safe and happy and where staff are valued. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning; there are strong and caring relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves. Leaders are ambitious. You have rightly focused on securing high standards of teaching and learning since you accepted the position of acting headteacher in September 2015. Your governing body supports you well and also provides rigorous challenge in order to uphold the high standards you have set for your school.
- Leaders and governors hold an accurate view of overall school effectiveness. They know where there is strength and where more needs to be done. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching across the school and share their findings with staff, to help bring all teaching up to the standards of the best. Leaders' action plans are detailed and focus on the areas in most need of improvement. We discussed how plans could be further enhanced by having checkpoints throughout the year, to make sure that you are on track to achieve your targets.
- Pupils are now making stronger progress in mathematics across the school. Work in pupils' books and your own assessment records show this to be the case. In 2014, the progress of pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 did not meet your high standards, so you set about making improvements. The mathematics leader now has a strong overview of

standards in each class. She attends regular meetings with you to check on the progress being made by all pupils. Where there have been relapses in progress, support is put in place to help pupils to catch up quickly. The leader also writes termly reports for governors, clarifying how much progress pupils are making, so that they can keep abreast of performance and challenge any aspects which are weaker. The leader has already identified, as a main priority, that pupils need more opportunities to broaden and deepen their mathematical understanding by completing more problem-solving and reasoning tasks.

- Teachers work hard to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. For example, in a Key Stage 2 poetry lesson, activities had been planned carefully to make sure that all pupils were challenged and made good progress. More-able pupils were learning about more technical aspects of poetry and supported each other well, to broaden and deepen their understanding. Other pupils worked with similar interest with the teacher, while support staff provided strong support for pupils who needed some extra help. The purposeful learning witnessed in this lesson was typical of the teaching observed during the inspection.
- Pupils behave well because staff have high expectations and there is a strong culture which reflects your school values. They say that teachers are friendly but expect them to work hard. Pupils are rewarded with raffle tickets for behaving well and for working hard. They look forward to Friday assemblies to see if their ticket is picked out in the 'Golden Raffle' so they can claim a prize. Throughout the inspection, behaviour was consistently positive, in classrooms, corridors, in the dining hall and outside.
- You are well on the way to finalising your systems to check and report on the progress pupils are making since the removal of National Curriculum levels. After trialling and testing different methods and discussing these with staff, you are at a stage where you have confidence in the system, which complements your work on the new curriculum. Staff are now more informed about what pupils know and what they still need to master.
- You have listened to the views of parents. Many parents responding in writing to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, say that communication has improved and that you make yourself available to deal with any concerns they have. Parents I spoke to before school echoed this view and said that improvements to the website and the texting service were helpful additions to keep parents informed. You have also responded to your own parental questionnaire, sharing the aspects parents feel are strengths, but also giving context and explanation where parents had concerns. Parents also value the termly 'let's share' sessions that you have introduced, in addition to the termly parent meetings, to help keep parents 'in the loop'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- marking comments to pupils always provide clear guidance on how to improve their learning
- pupils have more opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics
- action plans can be checked more easily to make sure that they are making a difference.

Yours sincerely

Ian Hardman
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the acting deputy headteacher, the literacy and mathematics leaders, the early years leader, four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a group of six pupils. I spoke with other pupils informally, both in and outside of classrooms, and I also spoke with an advisor from the local authority. I considered a wide range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan, documents relating to safeguarding and information relating to pupils' progress. I visited the vast majority of classes with you to observe pupils' learning and to speak with them about their learning. I also considered the responses of 71 parents who completed the online Parent View questionnaires and a sample of parental questionnaires completed for school leaders.