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Miss Rebecca Anson
Headteacher
St Gabriel's CofE Primary School
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Dear Miss Anson

Short inspection of St Gabriel's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 July 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

Since your appointment last year, you have provided decisive leadership and motivated your staff to explore new ways to realise the potential of the pupils in their care. Your wider team is embracing new leadership roles with renewed purpose and this is leading to an improving quality of teaching. New leaders are taking increasing responsibility for innovating changes in teaching, although they are still developing their skills in assessing the impact of these innovations. Your self-evaluation is honest and accurate, encouraging your team to explore deeper solutions to achieve ongoing improvement.

The school is a calm and nurturing environment where staff help pupils to develop well, academically and personally. Pupils clearly enjoy being at the school and they enjoy learning. The parents that I spoke to all think that the school provides a very good standard of education. They told me that they particularly appreciate the community ethos that allows their children to thrive. One parent captured this ethos, stating that 'We love the caring, transparent and high expectations.'

Leaders have addressed many of the issues identified at the time of the previous inspection. The previous inspection found there was work to do to improve pupils' writing skills, especially at key stage 1. When examining pupils' books, I was impressed by the effectiveness of leaders' efforts to develop writing throughout the school. You told me that this has been a key part of your improvement planning.

However, while much has been achieved, you recognise that some teaching does not develop language and communication skills well enough and pupils' progress in writing could be further strengthened.

The curriculum at St Gabriel's is broad and offers pupils a wide range of activities within the school. The wider 'creative curriculum' is varied, engaging and well planned, providing pupils with a wealth of opportunities to develop their interests and skills across different subjects. Through such opportunities, you raise pupils' aspirations and ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The behaviour I saw, throughout the school, in and outside lessons, was exemplary. Pupils are welcoming, well-mannered and polite. Their positive attitudes to learning make a notable contribution to their progress in the classroom. In an assembly on the theme of 'compassion', I saw how pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including their understanding of British values, is an intrinsic part of the work of the school.

All pupils who spoke to me were extremely positive about their school. They talk with enthusiasm about their learning. They speak highly of their teachers, whose support they value. Pupils really appreciate the way that their teachers try to make learning fun and engaging.

Outside of the classroom, you have created a stimulating, lively space for the pupils to thrive. The combination of a range of exciting play opportunities, alongside quieter spaces, where I saw pupils reading quietly, is appreciated by all the school community. Pupils' creative work on display around the school is of high quality and reflects a school at the heart of its community.

Governors are enthused by your leadership. They are clear about the strengths and areas for development, and support and challenge you and your leadership team well. They are informed about the school's work through a range of external reviews and their own regular visits. Consequently, they recognise that leaders' evaluations could be sharper in assessing the impact of teaching on outcomes for all groups of pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leadership team ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are robust and fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school, backed up by robust record-keeping. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the opportunities that they have to learn about staying safe online. They told me that they feel confident that all pupils from different backgrounds, cultures or beliefs are accepted by their peers. They also said that bullying is rare but should it occur, staff deal with it quickly.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training and that those responsible for safeguarding and recruitment have appropriate and up-to-date qualifications. Governors receive relevant training and carry out monitoring visits to check on arrangements for safeguarding. Leaders show vigilance in ensuring that children are not missing from education, and attendance has improved consistently over recent years. Staff regularly discuss safeguarding arrangements at their meetings.

Inspection findings

- At the start of this inspection, we agreed on a number of key lines of enquiry. The first looked at how effectively leaders are improving outcomes for the most able pupils in key stage 1. This was because in the past few years, the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average.
- The changes made to teaching and learning in reading, writing and mathematics, in key stage 1, have ensured that pupils' achievement at the highest standard has improved in 2018. Information that you provided showed that most-able pupils are currently now achieving greater depth in proportions that are more in line with the national expectation. However, although the most able pupils made good progress from their starting points, we agreed that pupils' attainment at the highest standard remains an area for further improvement.
- Leaders have ensured that teachers have opportunities to improve the accuracy of their assessments and use this information in their planning to meet pupils' needs. My scrutiny of pupils' work, and my observations in lessons with you, indicate that most of the activities set by teachers are well matched to the pupils' abilities. However, we agreed that in some year groups, teachers do not set tasks that are sufficiently challenging for pupils. This work is still ongoing and you acknowledge that this is an area that could improve further across the school.
- The next area that I explored with you was the strong progress made by pupils during their time in key stage 2. Over the past three years, the progress made by the pupils who left the school has been well above average. In 2017, it warranted a congratulatory letter from the Minister of State for School Standards.
- Leaders have ensured that the teaching of writing at key stage 2 provides pupils with frequent opportunities to apply their writing skills in a range of subjects. Together with explicit objectives, teachers provide clear explanations and guidance which help pupils to write imaginatively, using well-chosen vocabulary and grammar. The wider creative curriculum at key stage 2 promotes extended writing and pupils demonstrate resilience in redrafting and editing their work. As a result, all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, have made swift progress.
- Leaders and teachers ensure that reading has a high profile across the school. Pupils read to me fluently and with expression. They enjoy reading and have a range of favourite authors. They enjoy the 'themed book corners' in their classrooms and rise to the challenge of more sophisticated reading choices.

- Mathematics lessons provide pupils with effective challenge. For example, in Year 4, pupils tackled activities of varying difficulty as they converted word problems into mathematical algorithms. Pupils enjoy working at greater depths of understanding. This was demonstrated when one pupil in a Year 6 class remarked, 'Let's try the harder bit!'
- Leaders and governors have ensured that staff receive the training they need to continually improve outcomes for pupils. A range of relevant training and professional development opportunities for teachers has improved teaching, leading to these strong outcomes.
- Finally, you were able to demonstrate through the school's data, the provisional results released on the morning of the inspection, external reviews, and work that I looked at in pupils' books, that the progress for pupils currently in the school remains strong and sustained.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- new leaders are well supported to develop their skills so that they are consistent and sharp in furthering pupils' progress
- the quality of teaching is consistent in raising and securing standards still further by ensuring that all pupils are challenged sufficiently to make the progress of which they are capable.

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

Yours sincerely

Jacques Szemalikowski
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your leadership team and middle leaders. I spoke by telephone to a representative of the local authority and the diocese, and met with the chair of the governing body alongside two further governors.

I met with a group of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils and talked with pupils at both breaktime and lunchtime. I spoke to a number of parents at the school gate and took account of comments in response to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I looked at a range of pupils' work. You accompanied me on visits to classrooms where together

we observed the learning taking place, spoke with pupils, and looked further at their work. I made additional unaccompanied visits to ensure that I saw every group in the school. I attended an assembly. I listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 5 read. I examined a range of documentation related to safeguarding, including the single central record of recruitment checks, child protection records, and professional training certificates.

I looked at reports from the school's partners evaluating its work. I examined the school's website and reviewed information about pupils' progress, attainment and attendance. I also considered the school's self-evaluation of how well it is doing, its improvement priorities, and assessment information for current pupils.