

23 January 2018

Mr Daniel Craft
Headteacher
St Peter's Catholic Primary School
Goresbrook Road
Dagenham
Essex
RM9 6UU

Dear Mr Craft

Short inspection of St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 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 was judged to be good in January 2018.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As headteacher, you provide a clear vision and purpose for staff and pupils. You demonstrate commitment and resolve and hold high expectations of teaching and outcomes for pupils.

You and your governors work well together and demonstrate a shared and ambitious vision for the future of the school. You share a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and your self-evaluation is accurate. Consequently you have secured sustained improvement.

Pupils are making rapid progress, particularly in reading and maths. Pupils experience a rich curriculum, both in school and out. As one parent commented: 'The head teacher has a clear direction and he provides pupils access to personal development and life skills.'

You make sure the school is at the centre of the community and a thriving hub for parents and carers as well as pupils. One pupil commented: 'I am proud to be a pupil at this school because we are all part of a community, and as a community, we never give up on each other.'

At the time of the previous inspection the school was asked to improve the quality of teaching by giving pupils more opportunities to write accurately and at length in a range of subjects, raising expectation that the standard of their writing will be as good as their reading, speaking and mathematics. You now make sure that all groups of pupils have opportunities to extend their writing through enriched first-hand experiences such as educational visits and visitors to the school.

This has led to improved outcomes in writing across the school. Writing in English books indicates that pupils write for purpose and make good progress in the development and application of skills. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to extend their writing skills in other subjects.

At the time of the previous inspection the school was also asked to improve the quality of teaching by setting work for all pupils that is neither too easy nor too difficult, whatever their prior knowledge and ability. You and your leaders have enabled teachers to address this through very concise professional development.

Teachers now make use of assessment data to ensure that work offers appropriate challenge for all pupils. They also ensure that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work and give them time to reflect on this. This has had a strong impact on improving the progress that pupils make in all subjects.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is positive. Pupils' respect for each other means they would not tolerate any unkindness; they say that there is never any bullying of any kind at their school. Teachers and other adults promote the highest expectations of behaviour. The focus on understanding pupils' rights, alongside their own responsibilities, helps pupils feel valued. They enjoy attending school and are proud to be part of the St Peter's community.

Governors hold school leaders to account for pupils' achievement. They use their understanding of school performance data and their own monitoring to challenge leaders on the impact that their actions are having. Leaders and governors demonstrate strong capacity to drive further school improvement. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

Almost all parents who responded on Parent View would recommend the school to other parents. One parent commented on the Parent View free-text facility: 'I find St Peter's school a fantastic school with my child in Year 5 progressing very well & enjoying school life.'

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are carefully maintained. The school communicates clearly that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Regular training means that school staff know what to do if they have a concern about a child. Governors monitor the school's safeguarding work; for example, safeguarding is a standing agenda item at all governors' meetings.

Pupils report that they feel very safe and explain that they can approach any adult in the school if they have a worry or concern. They demonstrate an impressive knowledge of keeping safe when using information technology. They are very clear about the reasons why access to the internet in school is restricted. All parents who responded to the online inspection questionnaire reported that their children felt safe at school and were well looked after and nurtured.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry focused on evaluating leaders' actions in diminishing the differences between most-able disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in writing at key stage 2. This is because the school's most recent results show that most-able disadvantaged pupils' achievement in writing was below the national average.
- You have taken decisive action by implementing a new approach to teaching and supporting these pupils. As a result, their performance in writing is improving. Teachers use a range of strategies and timely intervention and this support enables the most able disadvantaged pupils' learning to progress well in writing lessons.
- This was further evidenced in the English books where teachers challenge pupils to focus on the next steps that will most improve their writing. Pupils successfully acquire a range of age-related skills. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are using a variety of complex techniques to engage the reader. The most able pupils are encouraged by their teachers to use precise and well-chosen vocabulary to heighten the reader's interest in their work. They demonstrate highly developed skills in sentence punctuation and grammar. This adds depth to their writing.
- Next, I focused on evaluating whether leaders promote writing across the wider curriculum effectively. Pupils' progress in writing in the 2017 national curriculum assessments was not as strong as their progress in reading and mathematics. You agreed that this was an area already on the school improvement plan. As a result of implementing actions from your school improvement plan, teachers are using a range of strategies to further promote writing in the wider curriculum. However, this has not had time to embed in all classes and across all subjects. You have ensured that parents understand the new expectations so that they can support their children at home.
- Finally, I focused on the long-term sustainability of good attendance, which the school has already indicated it has been successful in establishing. The school's own attendance information for the academic year 2016 to 2017 shows that overall absence rates have fallen. Your current data also reflects that the school has made further improvements to attendance.
- You have in place a range of measures to check and improve pupils' attendance. You ensure that poor attendance does not go unchallenged. These actions are proving to be successful because attendance is improving for individuals and groups. Pupils who are persistently absent are monitored closely and their attendance has greatly improved.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- writing skills are promoted equally effectively across other subjects as they are in English.

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 Barking and Dagenham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Danvir Visvanathan
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I carried out the following activities:

- a scrutiny of the single central record of recruitment checks and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection, including the school's safeguarding policy and other policies relating to governance, pupil behaviour and attendance
- meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, six governors and a local authority representative
- a review of the school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plans, observations of learning across the school, and work analysis in pupils' writing, mathematics and wider curriculum books
- observations of pupils in a range of situations, including at break and lunchtime
- conversations with a group of pupils and with pupils in lessons, on the playground and in the dining hall
- listening to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read
- I took into account 16 parent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 234 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 24 responses to the staff survey.