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Mrs Carmen Palmer
Headteacher
St Richard's Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mrs Palmer

Short inspection of St Richard's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 June 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 May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

The school's values as an inclusive church school are seen throughout the school community. Governors are highly skilled and are an integral part of the community. They hold the school to account through continual support and challenge. Your collaboration with local schools has improved the accuracy of pupils' progress information.

Pupils in the resource base, the maple group, receive an individual timetable based on their academic need. Adults engage pupils and ensure that transitions are seamless to avoid undue stress. Parents of pupils in the group meet regularly with leaders and regard the school highly. They want their children to be a part of this community. They told me how much they appreciate the work that the school does to ensure that their children feel included in the school. Leaders have long-term plans for the resource base and see it as an important part of the school. One parent told me they were 'impressed by how each child is seen and treated as unique'.

You and your leaders have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The most able pupils receive appropriate challenge and recent outcomes at key stage 2 are above the national average for this group of pupils.

You use assessment information to ensure early intervention is in place so that any gaps in pupils' understanding are addressed.

There is a more consistent approach to the management of your early years provision than at the time of the previous inspection. The curriculum in the early years rightly concentrates on children's communication skills. Outcomes for the Reception class are improving and have done so consistently for the past three years.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school has appropriate policies and procedures in place. You and your leaders, including governors, manage the school's safeguarding arrangements extremely well. Leaders act swiftly when any issues arise, seek external advice as necessary and respond appropriately to it. Governors challenge the school to ensure safeguarding is a high priority. Leaders and governors take part in regular safeguarding training, including safer recruitment.

Pupils told me that they enjoy their learning and that adults have high expectations of their behaviour. They are taught how to stay safe, including how to manage their online safety. Parents are informed about how to keep their children safe. The school's newsletter regularly includes safeguarding advice.

Inspection findings

- Recent pupils' outcomes in phonics in Year 1 have been below those of pupils nationally. You and your leaders identified phonics as an area for improvement because in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2017 fewer pupils met the expected standard compared with the proportion of pupils nationally.
- You have renewed the focus on phonics teaching through collaborative planning across key stage 1 and in the early years. Teaching staff have met regularly to discuss pupils' learning, and ensure that accurate monitoring of progress takes place.
- I listened to pupils in Reception and key stage 1 read. Reception children confidently read familiar words and attempted, generally successfully, to use their phonics decoding skills to read unfamiliar ones. In phonics, teachers' expectations are high. Pupils are taught about the pitfalls of similar sounding digraphs such as 'ir' and 'ur' and how to distinguish between them. Parents have attended phonics workshops where they had the opportunity to learn how to support their children.
- Pupils make good progress in phonics from their starting points. Of those pupils who did not reach the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 last year, the majority reached it during their time in Year 2.

- Disadvantaged pupils' recent key stage 2 outcomes in writing were below those of their peers nationally. Writing for all pupils, but especially for disadvantaged pupils, is an area that you have identified for improvement.
- The school uses its pupil premium funding well. You and your leaders review the impact of the additional support for disadvantaged pupils. Teaching staff have received specialist training in teaching pupils with dyslexia. You ensure that additional funding provides value for money and have introduced a 'lessons learnt' scheme for reviewing interventions and support. Speech and language therapy is used to improve communication skills and you have plans to broaden the volunteer reading programme.
- I saw that disadvantaged pupils are typically confident writers. They use adults' guidance to help them to complete tasks to a high standard. Pupils described to me how they work independently to improve and extend their writing. Pupils in key stage 2 told me that they felt motivated to achieve pen licences and worked hard to gain them. They also told me that they know exactly what they need to do to improve their writing and handwriting. Ensuring that writing, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, improves further is a key priority for the school.
- Your emphasis on attendance has had a positive effect. Leaders have improved communication channels with parents. You have succeeded in raising the whole school community's awareness of the issues surrounding attendance, including term-time holidays and the effect of persistent absence on pupils' progress. Recent low attendance rates have been addressed and absence rates for current pupils are once more in line with the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's continued emphasis on writing for disadvantaged pupils leads to improved outcomes in line with those nationally.

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

Yours sincerely

Jason Hughes
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held meetings with you, senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and members of the governing body.

I held a meeting with the school's improvement adviser.

I took into account the views of 38 staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey.

I also took into account the 100 responses to Parent View.

Together with leaders, I visited classrooms across the school and heard pupils read.

I scrutinised school documents, including policies and safeguarding records, the school's website and written records of governors' meetings.

I reviewed work in pupils' books and held discussions with pupils about their learning. There were 84 responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils.