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Mrs Nicola Doyle
St Mary Abbots CofE Primary School
2 Kensington Church Court
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Dear Mrs Doyle

Short inspection of St Mary Abbots CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 18 September 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 November 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 has experienced a number of changes in the last four years, and leaders and governors have responded to these positively. You have worked successfully in partnership with local schools, the local authority and your diocese to support your improvement work. You have built an effective and skilled leadership team, which shares a common purpose. Governors share this purpose too. They use their good knowledge and understanding to support and challenge school leaders, for example asking questions about the impact of the pupil premium funding to ensure that the progress of these pupils improves.

Leaders have made significant changes to their processes for monitoring the performance of the school. They have reviewed the curriculum and provided staff with a range of professional development to support improvements in teaching. These are having a good impact on the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils. You recognise that some changes are embedding, and you continue to refine and develop the school's provision to meet the changing needs of your pupils. Leaders have high aspirations for pupils, and raising expectations among pupils and staff has been a characteristic of the school's improvement work.

Pupils I spoke to are clear that St Mary Abbots is a school that looks after its pupils very well. Staff and pupils alike are welcoming and respectful to one another. The school has a strong ethos underpinned by its Christian faith, and this is lived out in the school's day-to-day activities.

Leaders have prioritised the areas for improvement identified in the previous

inspection. You have implemented new guidance for feedback to pupils, which is now consistent across most classes, and pupils respond to this well. You have restructured your leadership team and reviewed the process of monitoring the achievement of different pupil groups. You use this information to hold teachers to account for the progress of pupils. However, some lower-attaining pupils do not always access learning in lessons successfully.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are effective. There are clear systems and processes for reporting concerns and escalating these appropriately. You have ensured that staff understand and follow school procedures consistently, and this contributes well to the culture of vigilance.

Staff are provided with regular training which keeps them updated with the latest statutory guidance. You have considered local risks and made plans for these.

Governors have a good oversight and understanding of the school's arrangements. They attend regular training. Governors monitor arrangements regularly through their visits and safeguarding sub-committee meetings.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and say they feel safe in school. The curriculum supports this well. For example, children in key stage 1 learn about appropriate relationships through the 'my wonderful body' topic. Teachers ensure that pupils have a good understanding of e-safety, which is supported through work with parents. Pupils know which adults to go to in school if they have a concern.

Inspection findings

- I considered three key lines of enquiry to test out if the school remains good. Firstly, I considered how effectively teaching meets the needs of the most and least able pupils. This was identified as an area for improvement in your last inspection. We agreed to look at this in the context of learning in mathematics as this has been a focus for your development of teaching and learning.
- Teaching staff are held to account for the progress of these two groups of pupils through regular progress meetings. Staff have received a good range of professional development to support their understanding of appropriate teaching strategies. You have reviewed your curriculum with a view to improving engagement for different groups of pupils. For example, your mathematics curriculum focuses on identifying gaps in pupils' learning, and teaching addresses these. Leaders have improved the early identification of vulnerable pupils so staff are now more aware of these pupils. You have developed a range of different ways to support vulnerable pupils; for example, a volunteer reading programme. You have introduced 'learning partners' to help pupils discuss their learning and to support one another.
- During our learning walk and discussions with pupils, it is clear that many of your most able pupils feel challenged in their learning. Examples we observed in

lessons and in pupils' work show that they consolidate their understanding of mathematics skills and knowledge well. They can then apply these skills to tackle more complex reasoning and problem-solving tasks. In some classes, this practice is at a developmental stage. A growing proportion of pupils achieve the greater depth standard in their learning. However, in some classes lower-attaining pupils do not always access learning successfully. For some of these pupils the choice of resources and teaching strategies do not enable them to make strong gains in their learning.

- My second line of enquiry was to explore how well the broader curriculum helps pupils to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills in all aspects of their education.
- Leaders have a clear rationale for the curriculum. You have begun to adopt a comprehensive range of curriculum plans that map out the progression of learning in each subject. Teachers say that they find these very helpful. They have begun to make connections across the plans to create themes, which provide a meaningful context for pupils' learning. Pupils I spoke to recalled motivating contexts for learning, for example visits to museums, building model castles and using drama to bring historical events to life.
- Pupils' work in books and displays indicates that the organisation of the curriculum supports improving outcomes for pupils. Leaders recognise that developing the curriculum is a 'work in progress'. There is a need to review provision with staff and ensure that there is coherence and increased opportunities for pupils to deepen their learning.
- My final key line of enquiry was to understand how well leaders monitor and acquire an understanding of the progress of groups of pupils (for example, pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities) so that these pupils make at least good progress over time. This was an area for improvement in your previous inspection, and has been a focus of your improvement work.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have created clear systems and processes for monitoring pupils' progress. For example, their in-depth analysis of assessment information for different pupil groups, alongside regular scrutiny of pupils' work, ensures that leaders understand which pupils are underperforming. This evidence also helps leaders to understand the impact of their actions on pupils' progress, and to build on this.
- Your actions have ensured that the needs of most-able pupils are being met. Leaders have identified the needs of lower-attaining pupils and those with additional needs. They have implemented a range of additional provision to support progress. In addition, they have ensured that supporting adults have received training to provide effective additional help. In some lessons, teachers are using their increased knowledge of vulnerable pupils to plan learning activities that meets the pupils' needs. However, in some cases, teaching does not always help lower-attaining pupils to access learning successfully.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the lowest-attaining pupils are helped to understand what they are learning and are provided with resources and teaching to achieve this
- they continue to embed improvements in the broader curriculum so that it inspires pupils to learn in all areas of their education.

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 Kensington and Chelsea. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nicholas Flesher
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held meetings with leaders, including governors, to discuss their self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness and improvement plans. I considered documentation provided by the school, and information on the school's website. All classes were visited together with the headteacher. Pupils' books were also reviewed. I spoke to pupils about their learning during my visits to classrooms and in the playground. I also met with a group of pupils from key stages 1 and 2. I met with a representative group of staff. The 37 responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils were taken into account, as were the six responses recorded on Parent View.