

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



21 February 2019

Mrs Ellen Peyton
Headteacher
St George's, Bickley, Church of England Primary School
Tylney Road
Bromley
Kent
BR1 2RL

Dear Mrs Peyton

Short inspection of St George's, Bickley, Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 February 2019, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in February 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You and your leadership team work closely and effectively. Your pupils flourish in the open, supportive environment you have created and achieve high standards as a result. The school's rich curriculum equips them with knowledge across a range of subjects. It provides opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and specialise in music, languages and sport.

Comments such as 'The school balances academic achievement with a caring, nurturing approach and a good sense of fun' were typical of feedback from parents. You and your leaders have developed a strong sense of community where everyone is included. As a Church of England school, you promote Christian values of kindness and consideration for others. For example, older pupils are encouraged to take a leading role in helping younger children at playtime and in lessons.

Since the previous inspection, the quality of education at St George's has gone from strength to strength. You have successfully addressed the key areas for improvement identified in the report. As a result, pupils' progress and attainment is above national figures in all areas. You and your leaders continually seek to improve the quality of education at the school. You evaluate this accurately and implement highly effective strategies to address areas for development.

The leadership team receives a balance of challenge and support from representatives of the Aquinas multi-academy trust and the Aquinas school's advisory council. Members of the Aquinas advisory council understand the school well as a result of regular visits. The chair promotes a highly reflective approach to leadership and school improvement. The Aquinas multi-academy trust's chief executive officer has an accurate picture of the strengths and key areas to develop at the school. Trustees play a moderation and quality assurance role. The trust's scrutiny committee rigorously monitors pupil achievement and the progress you are making against your school development plan. As part of the trust, you and your leaders benefit from a wide range of professional development including sharing expertise with partner schools.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school. They say that, if they have a concern, a member of staff is always nearby who helps them to remain calm and sort things out. In their view, any incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils feel they are taken very seriously by staff and issues are quickly resolved. The majority of parents who responded to Parent View reported that the school deals effectively with bullying and that their child is happy at school. Leaders plan carefully for pupils' well-being. For example, pupils can spend time with a learning mentor or children's counsellor if they feel unhappy. Teachers ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. For example, pupils talk knowledgeably about fire safety and online safety. When I visited lessons, Year 4 pupils were learning how to respond to, and prevent, cyber bullying.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are well managed and fit for purpose. You have made sure that training for staff is up to date and includes the most recent statutory guidance. As designated safeguarding lead, you understand the risks to your pupils and use a range of strategies to address these. You follow up concerns thoroughly. This includes working with the local authority social care team and providing pastoral support at school.

Inspection findings

- In the previous inspection report, writing was identified as an area to improve. We agreed this should be our first line of enquiry. During the inspection, we looked at the impact of the work carried out by leaders to raise standards in writing. Over the last three years, progress in writing has improved and attainment has risen steadily. In 2018, by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2, attainment in writing at both the expected standard and the higher standard

was above the national average. The progress in writing made by pupils in Year 6 in 2018 was also above the national average.

- I visited lessons with you and your assistant headteacher. We typically saw teachers challenging pupils to make better vocabulary choices and use more complex grammatical structures in their writing. Teachers demonstrate accurate subject knowledge and use probing questions to deepen pupils' understanding. Pupils learn how writers create empathy with a character.
- I looked at a range of books with middle leaders. We saw evidence of pupils making exceptional progress in writing and effectively applying the skills learned in lessons. Their choice of language suits the style of writing. For example, in historical narrative, Year 6 pupils typically use phrases like 'in the distant past', 'the mighty king cowered', and 'grand splendour'.
- Teachers implement a successful strategy to improve pupils' editing of their writing. This strategy is shared with other schools in the Aquinas multi-academy trust.
- Middle leaders promote progress in writing across the curriculum. In science, teachers ensure that pupils have access to precise technical vocabulary, for example in a high-quality explanation text entitled, 'How does the circulatory system work?' Alongside the focus on writing, teachers deepen pupils' acquisition of knowledge in each subject. For example, pupils apply knowledge learned in one subject to help understanding in another.
- Our second line of enquiry focused on pupils' attendance. Pupil attendance at St George's is consistently above the national average. However, in 2018, absence rates, including persistent absence, for pupils receiving support for special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils were higher than the national average. You accurately identified this as a priority on your school development plan.
- Leaders have implemented carefully thought-through pastoral and academic interventions for pupils in these groups. These include strategies to build close relationships with families. Leaders monitor attendance information regularly and ensure that low attendance is systematically followed up.
- Since September, the attendance of pupils receiving support for special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils has improved and is closer to national figures. Case studies show that, following improvements in attendance, these pupils are making at least good progress from their starting points. You and your leaders recognise, however, that there is more work to be done to embed these recent changes and further improve attendance for these groups.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and of disadvantaged pupils continues to improve.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Aquinas multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Rochester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bromley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Franklin
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I carried out the following activities during the inspection:

- met school staff and held discussions with you and senior and middle leaders
- undertook joint visits to lessons with you and your assistant headteachers
- scrutinised a range of pupils' work with leaders
- met with a group of pupils and asked them their views of the school
- met with the chair of the Aquinas advisory council
- met with representatives from the Aquinas multi-academy trust
- reviewed a range of documents, including those related to safeguarding and the school's self-evaluation
- analysed the 114 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey
- analysed the 75 responses to the pupil survey
- analysed the 36 responses to the staff survey.