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Mr John Wilson
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Wilson

Short inspection of St Peter's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 February 2017, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

You and senior leaders have maintained the good quality of education since the last inspection. You have also established and maintained a school culture based on raising pupils' aspirations by breaking down any barriers pupils have to their learning. The school sits at the heart of the local community and has a family feel in which everyone is looking out for and caring for one another. The school invests heavily in providing experiences, visits and visitors to the school to which pupils would not normally have access. This is highly effective. Pupils confirm they like school, lessons are interesting and they learn a great deal from additional experiences that the school provides. The Christian ethos and values mean that, as pupils phrased it, 'We feel closer to God.'

The previous inspection asked the school to improve the quality of pupils' writing and use of vocabulary, to share good practice between teachers and to track carefully individual pupils' achievement. You and senior leaders have been successful in raising pupils' attainment and progress in writing. You have trained staff in how to teach pupils to talk through their thinking and their vocabulary before starting to write. Pupils' writing is increasingly sophisticated but the writing in science does not reflect the high standard of pupils' English work. You have been successful in establishing a learning culture in which teachers and teaching assistants learn from each other and help to improve each other's practice.

Standards have been stubbornly well below average at the end of Reception for a number of years and you recognise that this is a priority for improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is a high priority and staff are vigilant and alert to any concerns. You work well with other agencies and readily share information to ensure that each child is protected. You and the leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed. There is an efficient and effective system of checking staff's suitability to work with children and for training and updating staff in any changes to national or local procedures.

Pupils feel safe. They pointed out they feel safe because of the school's security procedures and there is always someone they feel they can talk to. Similarly, they said they feel safe because staff teach them well about how to stay safe and alert when using the internet. There is a very strong focus on catering for pupils' mental health and well-being.

Inspection findings

- For this inspection, I focused on finding out why children's attainment is well below average at the end of Reception, particularly for boys. Children enter the Nursery and Reception with exceptionally low levels of development and skills for their age. They make good progress in their physical skills, personal, social and emotional development and in other areas of learning, such as technology. They concentrate on tasks, persevere and confidently choose activities, resources and equipment.
- Children make steady progress in reading, writing and numbers but by the end of Reception all pupils and particularly boys, those born in the summer, and those with a White British background, attain low levels of development, which means they are not ready for Year 1. This is partly because there are missed chances inside and outside to ensure that all of the boys read, pronounce and write words as often as possible or to enable them to extend or apply their knowledge of mathematical ideas. There are occasions when boys are engaged in purposeless activities, when away from adults, which means their learning time is not maximised.
- Second, I investigated the accuracy of assessment and why the published assessment information indicates pupils' progress is well below average in key stage 1 but exceptionally rapid progress in key stage 2. The local authority has thoroughly checked the assessment and teachers' judgements were judged to be accurate at the end of Reception and Year 6. Part of the reason behind low attainment at the end of Year 2 is that the curriculum expectations increased significantly and the local authority's moderators were very strict in their interpretation of new assessment rules. The school has created an assessment system which allows teachers to pinpoint precisely what pupils should learn next in mathematics, writing and reading.
- Third, I looked at pupils' attainment and the quality of writing in science. Pupils over their time in the school gather a good understanding of scientific ideas and terminology. They can explain about the forces of friction and gravity and can explain the properties of materials. Pupils' work indicates they make good

progress in their scientific knowledge and understanding across the school from their low starting points at the end of Reception. Pupils are less secure in their knowledge about scientific investigations. Their writing is hampered on occasions by worksheets which provide no space for them to write, explain their ideas or draw conclusions from observations, data and results. Their ability to write in English is not reflected in their scientific writing and similarly their skills in mathematics are not reflected in their science experiments.

- Last, I asked questions to find out if the governing body was checking its statutory duty to publish correct and accurate information on the website. At the start of the inspection, the website information did not comply with national requirements but this was fixed by the end of the inspection because the information was already held in school. There is a good system in place for governors to check the website, its contents, accessibility and its accuracy. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and effectively shape the direction and culture of the school and challenge the school to improve further.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the difference in attainment between boys and all children nationally, at the end of Reception, diminishes rapidly
- the quality of pupils' writing and mathematics is reflected in their science work, particularly in experiments and investigations.

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

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I spoke with you and senior leaders about improvement since the last inspection, your evaluation of the quality of the school's work and about the effectiveness of safeguarding. I also met with the teachers who have had responsibility for leading science in the school and with the leader responsible for the quality of provision in the early years and key stage 1. I met with three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.

I looked through the responses from 11 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, in addition to your own survey of 134 parents. I met with a

group of pupils and looked through the answers provided by 100 pupils to Ofsted's online pupil survey. I also looked through the 16 responses provided by staff to Ofsted's online staff survey.

I looked through pupils' work from each class and observed teaching with senior leaders in the early years and in Years 1 and 2.