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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Tonnie Read
Headteacher
St Mary Magdalene CofE Primary School
Rowington Close
Warwick Estate
Paddington
London
W2 5TF

Dear Mrs Read

Short inspection of St Mary Magdalene CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 December 2016, 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are passionate in your ambition that all children should achieve their full potential. You have united your senior and middle leadership teams in your determined drive to ensure equality of opportunity for all of your pupils. This has created a positive climate where staff feel able to try out new ideas and innovate in their teaching. Staff, pupils and most parents are proud of the school and its achievements.

You have successfully built upon the strengths identified at the previous inspection. For example, you have ensured that the school's curriculum has continued to develop and respond to changes nationally. You have raised expectations of what pupils can achieve. Staff and pupils have risen to this challenge. Pupils continue to make good progress in their learning.

The senior leadership team and the governing body have continued to develop a positive working relationship with parents. Your middle leaders have supported you in developing workshops and regular opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning. For example, parents were recently able to attend a workshop for mathematics. This enabled them to work alongside their child, while learning about the mathematics curriculum. One parent summed up the views of many when she said: 'The school is really open. Leaders try to help us get involved

and the teachers are open and friendly. Teachers are always helping us get involved. For example, I was asked this morning if I would like to accompany my child's class on their half-termly visit to the public library.' You are using survey information and feedback from parents to improve the satisfaction of the very small number of parents who remain dissatisfied with the work of this good school.

Governors regularly undertake visits to the school. For example, they visit classes, parents evenings and assemblies. This helps governors better understand the work of the school. Governors also have a formal day annually where they all visit the school and gather the views of parents. This has helped your governors raise their profile in the school community so more parents know who they are. Governors have used the additional knowledge this gives them to challenge you to improve the school still further. For example, you have increased the frequency of swimming lessons following parental feedback given directly to governors.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have rightly given safeguarding a high priority in the school. Leaders have considered the school's locality and the issues which are more likely in this area of London. You have engaged with the local authority to train staff in the 'Prevent' duty. Staff understand their responsibilities and are well prepared to identify pupils at risk of radicalisation or extremism. Your designated safeguarding lead in school provides regular top-up training for staff on a range of safeguarding issues. Consequently, your staff have a clear understanding of issues which could pose risks to the safety of your pupils.

You have made sure that the school works well with other education providers locally. You actively share information, particularly when this involves online bullying or threatening behaviour with pupils from other schools. As a result, you and your local network of schools are effectively diffusing issues which pose a risk to your pupils and could spill over beyond the school gates. Your computing curriculum is exemplary in preparing pupils to be safe online. Pupils are actively taught to become 'digital citizens' and understand how to stay safe when using the internet, mobile phones, consoles, etc. Consequently, pupils talk confidently about staying safe from online bullying. However, they also understand a wide range of other important strategies, for example developing strong passwords for online accounts to reduce the threat of their online accounts being hacked.

Where concerns about individuals arise, leaders deal with them quickly. They ensure that children get the support they need. A strong partnership with the local authority and other relevant agencies has ensured that concerns have been dealt with effectively over time.

Inspection findings

- The previous inspection recommended improving teaching further by increasing teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. It also recommended that subject leaders take a more active role in developing their areas of responsibility

and monitoring the impact of their work. Subject leaders now take charge of their areas of responsibility and accurately check the impact of their own work. You allow autonomy for staff to develop and enable them to trial and evaluate what works well for your pupils.

- All leaders have resolutely focused on driving up the progress of the disadvantaged and the most able disadvantaged pupils. As a result, these pupils make strong progress throughout the school. By the end of key stage 2, they have achieved more highly than all pupils nationally for the last two years, in reading, writing and mathematics. This is in part due to the careful monitoring by senior and subject leaders.
- The previous inspection identified reading as an area for development. Leaders at all levels have raised the profile of reading. There are many quiet places for pupils to read the plentiful books available at break and lunchtimes. Pupils enjoy reading. During their time at school they develop fluency and expression in reading. Pupils have a palpable excitement when talking about their shared class novels.
- You rightly acknowledge that pupils' progress in the Year 2 and Year 6 reading assessments dipped last year. Leaders anticipated this dip and have successfully intervened to raise pupils' achievement. Assessment information, pupils' books and discussions with pupils show that progress of pupils in reading is good across the school and leaders are confident of bettering last year's results this year.
- Phonics teaching is consistent and accurate. All adults are confident in ensuring that pupils can join letters together to make words (blending) or break up words into their sounds (segmenting). Teaching over time ensures that pupils make good progress in their development of reading from when they start at school. To improve phonics and reading further you are adapting their teaching based on visits to schools with 100% achievement in the phonics screening check.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is good and for many outstanding, particularly for the disadvantaged most able. However, the school's own assessment information shows that the small number of non-disadvantaged most-able pupils make slower progress than their peers. They also made less progress than all pupils by the end of Year 6 in 2016. You agree that this is, in part, due to pupils having too few opportunities to explain their mathematical thinking. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that they do not develop their ability to write how and why they tackle calculations as they do.
- Staff have positive relationships with pupils. They are warm and welcoming from the time the school gates open. Senior leaders and staff are freely available for parents, and staff know individual pupils and families. Pupils summed this up when speaking to the inspector: 'The teachers are really friendly. We can ask them for help and they would do anything to help us learn and do well. They make us smile. I am sad when I am unwell as it means I can't come to school!'
- Bullying incidents have fallen over time. Leaders have taken a zero-tolerance approach and used exclusions to help eradicate bullying. The curriculum has been adapted to help ensure that pupils know how to deal with bullying and to consider the feelings of others.
- The school successfully built the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into their curriculum. Pupils speak knowledgeably about their own rights

and respecting other people through their own behaviour. Consequently, fixed-term exclusions, which had been much higher than other primary schools nationally, have not been used since early autumn 2015. Leaders accept they must maintain this improvement over the long term.

- Behaviour in classrooms and around the school building is exemplary. Pupils work well together and show mutual respect. They remain focused on learning regardless of who they are working with in school. For example, Year 5 pupils behaved well and focused on learning when taught by a supply teacher during the inspection.
- Playground behaviour has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Records show that the number of behaviour incidents has fallen. There are very few physical or verbal issues over time. Pupils confirm that they are happy and safe in the playground. Pupils make use of the wide variety of different spaces available, for example, the football pitch, the climbing area, and quiet areas.
- Pupils' attendance has improved over the past 12 months. The school has employed a family support worker who is effectively helping families and intervening before attendance becomes low. Consequently, attendance is now in line with the national average for primary schools. Leaders carefully review attendance information and are aware that White British pupils are still the lowest attending group in the school. Though this group are performing well academically, leaders rightly acknowledge that higher attendance would enable even greater progress in learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance of pupils rises still further, in particular for pupils from a White British heritage
- pupils, particularly the most able, develop the ability to write about their thinking in mathematics, explaining how and why they have tackled calculations.

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 Westminster. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

David Storrie
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I agreed to prioritise the following areas with you at the start of the inspection:

- how well pupils were performing in their reading across key stages 1 and 2
- how well phonics was being taught and the progress children make in this early reading skill
- the attendance of pupils
- whether leaders had maintained the school's good standard of pupils' behaviour and promotion of their welfare
- the relationships between staff and pupils.

I carried out the following activities to explore these areas during the inspection:

- met with senior and middle leaders, governors and spoke to a representative from the local authority
- visited all classes across the school, on some occasions jointly with you
- listened to a range of pupils from Years 2 and 5 read, including those who did not achieve the required standard of phonics in Year 1 and some of the most able pupils
- considered the 11 responses to Ofsted's parent survey and 19 responses from staff to the staff survey
- considered the school's most recent survey of parents and how leaders had responded to this information
- scrutinised documentation including: assessment, behaviour and exclusions information; leaders' evaluation of the school's performance and plans for improvement; the single central record of pre-employment checks; policies and procedures; and minutes of governors' meetings.