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Mrs Patricia Andre-Watson
Headteacher
Franciscan Primary School
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London
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Dear Mrs Andre-Watson

Short inspection of Franciscan Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 September 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

Your steadfast leadership has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The senior leadership team, including the governing body, has ably supported you in the school's continued success.

You have dealt with the two areas for improvement identified in the previous report effectively. The proportion of most-able pupils who reach high levels of attainment has increased and the progress of the most able pupils throughout the school has accelerated. You and the senior leadership team have identified that the progress of the most able disadvantaged pupils requires further attention. I agree with this priority.

The previous inspection also identified the need to improve the progress that children make in the early years provision. Children in the early years now make a highly positive start to their school lives. The investment in improving the spaces to provide children with a wide range of learning experiences has paid off. The indoor and outdoor learning environments make very good use of the spacious accommodation. For example, children are able to ride their tricycles freely while others play and learn together in the covered role-play area. The early years team has made sure that the good start that children make is built on securely in Nursery and Reception. This enables children to make rapid and sustained progress. As a result, by the time they start Year 1, more children have reached a good level of development than seen nationally.

Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 also make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Their progress in other subjects has been a priority of the school since the introduction of the new national curriculum two years ago. The impact of this work can be seen in the high proportion of pupils who make strong progress in science. Although this inspection took place at the start of the academic year, I observed that pupils have settled quickly in their new classes and are building on previous learning effectively. Pupils talked to me with excitement about their new classes and teachers. They were proud to show me their most recent work. Their pleasure was clearly visible as they explained how much their writing has improved. They could see this when they compared this week's work with their writing from the same time last year.

The parents I spoke to had nothing but praise for the way in which you and your team of staff welcome families from a wide range of backgrounds, including asylum seekers and refugees. They told me how well the school helps pupils of all ages to settle quickly when they join the school, including the significant numbers who join the school part-way through the year.

Pupils told me how much they enjoy school and that they enjoy working alongside pupils from different faiths and cultures. They were particularly enthusiastic about how all staff look after them and how safe they feel in school. The school prepares pupils for life in modern Britain very well. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were visiting the Houses of Parliament.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The record of suitability checks made on staff is up to date. Training has ensured that staff have an up-to-date awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues that include female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation and the duty to prevent pupils being drawn into situations that put them at risk of harm.

The school works well with outside agencies and has ensured that there is an effective partnership with the local children's centre to support vulnerable families. The school acts swiftly and with good effect when there are concerns.

The governing body oversees safeguarding well. Governors make sure that child protection arrangements are up to date and reported on during their meetings.

Inspection findings

- The headteacher and the leadership team know the school very well. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and what needs to be done to improve further. Consequently, pupils' progress and levels of attainment have improved since the previous inspection.

- The governing body is well led by the chair. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's direction and how to hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and the progress of the pupils. Governors understand the school's assessment information, but they recognise that their level of challenge to leaders could be even more demanding, for example, by asking probing questions regarding the progress of those pupils who attend the school for the whole of their primary education compared with those who do not.
- The early years is well led. The highly effective start that children make is built upon year on year. Consistently strong rates of children's progress in the early years provision since the previous inspection are testament to this.
- Senior and middle leaders are heavily involved in regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. The headteacher has devised a system for tracking pupils' progress which effectively compares the progress of different groups and highlights any differences. Swift action is taken to support any pupils whose progress might be at risk of slowing down.
- Provisional results suggest that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 is in line with the expected standards seen nationally in 2016.
- The sample of pupils who read to me were fluent and able to use their phonics skills well to interpret new words. Nonetheless, leaders are not complacent. Their analysis of the assessment information and scrutiny of pupils' books confirm that pupils' reading comprehension skills could be even better. Leaders and teachers are equally ambitious to develop pupils' reading skills to improve their interpretation and understanding of more complicated texts.
- Pupils' knowledge and use of grammar, punctuation and spelling are impressive. In work seen during the inspection, standards were high.
- There is a high level of consistency in the quality of teaching. Classrooms, even at this early stage in the school year, have clear displays of pupils' work that illustrate the high expectations that teachers demand of pupils. As a result, pupils have engaged in their learning straightaway.
- Teaching assistants work well with groups of pupils who require additional support. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress throughout the school.
- Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively so that differences between the standards reached by disadvantaged pupils at the school and those of other pupils nationally have diminished.
- The most able pupils relish the challenging work teachers provide. Senior leaders agree with me that there is more to do to challenge the most able disadvantaged pupils. For example, not all teachers use assessment information precisely enough to support this group of pupils in their learning.
- The school has implemented a programme that supports pupils in becoming more resilient and confident in their learning. As a result, pupils are more determined and are not put off by challenging work or when they make mistakes. Senior leaders believe that this has been a key strategy in supporting pupils to make better progress. The confidence and enthusiasm of pupils seen during the inspection would certainly bear this out.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers identify and support the most able disadvantaged pupils more effectively
- governors use a detailed analysis of pupils' progress to ask probing and challenging questions.

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

Yours sincerely

John Seal
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The key lines of enquiry for this inspection examined the leaders' and managers' impact on the progress of disadvantaged and most-able disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics in key stages 1 and 2, the impact of reading strategies on current pupils in key stage 2, and how well the governing body holds leaders and managers to account for pupils' progress, and ensures that statutory requirements are met.

I met with you, the senior management team, staff, pupils and representatives of the governing body. I also held a meeting by telephone with the school improvement partner. I listened to a sample of pupils read and interviewed a group of pupils. I spoke informally with many other pupils in lessons and in the playground. I held conversations with a sample of parents before school, and met more formally with one parent. I looked at information provided by the school including the school's safeguarding records, policies and procedures and the single central record of recruitment checks. I looked at the school's assessment of its performance and information about pupils' progress. Lessons were visited, including in phonics, writing, mathematics and a range of learning activities in the Nursery and Reception classes.

There were not enough responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, for me to take them into account.