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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Vasoula Baron
Headteacher
St Cyprian's Greek Orthodox Primary Academy
Springfield Road
Thornton Heath
Surrey
CR7 8DZ

Dear Mrs Baron

Short inspection of St Cyprian's Greek Orthodox Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 16 October 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 September 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

You, your leaders, governors and trustees have created a distinctive character to the school and provide a clear direction which creates a strong sense of community and purpose, motivating pupils and staff to achieve well. Leaders and governors are reflective and provide targeted plans to secure continuous improvement. Parents, carers and staff alike recognise the high quality and dedication of leadership in your school at all levels. Leaders are fulfilling the school's aim: 'I am strong through Jesus Christ to be the best I can be.' Since the previous inspection, you have strengthened leadership by ensuring that leaders are well trained and share the same high aspirations as you in developing a strong culture for teaching, learning and good behaviour in the school. Teamwork is effective and staff want the best for all pupils.

You enjoy the confidence of parents, staff and pupils, ensuring that standards have continued to rise since the last inspection. A typical parents' comment was 'My son is taught to be a better human being at St Cyprian's and learned how to be a good citizen', while another parent said, 'There is a real sense of community within the school.'

Staff are happy in your school. You have an effective system for managing staff workload and they appreciate your efforts to prioritise their well-being. You manage

staff performance well. You ensure that staff take responsibility for developing their own teaching, while working to achieve the school improvement priorities.

Teaching remains a strong feature of the school. Teachers question pupils effectively and make sure that they have to think hard about their answers. Pupils are keen to listen to others and discuss their answers. You and your team have implemented a rich curriculum which provides pupils with strong literacy and numeracy skills, as well as good general knowledge, especially about Greek culture. Teachers and other adults are committed to pupils developing a wide range of vocabulary. Pupils in key stage 2 would benefit from further studying other elements of history and geography to ensure that their education is well rounded.

You recognise in your strong school evaluation that writing outcomes for the most able at the end of key stage 2 are not where you want them to be and that those pupils could make better progress. Consequently, this academic year, you are focusing on improving the quality of teaching in writing. You told me that, to strengthen writing progress further, teachers are working on developing opportunities for writing across the wider curriculum and also on raising their overall expectations, particularly for the most able.

Pupils are helpful, polite and well mannered. They listen well and respect the opinions of others. Their attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils enjoy their work and talk about their desire to do as well as they can. Pupils understand well the ethos of the school, with a number of pupils telling me, 'We follow the St Cyprian's way, which is to love, care and look after ourselves, our community, our school and each other.' Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities. This was exemplified by the positive attitude of the school council. Pupils say that they enjoy the wide range of clubs, trips and special events that are on offer. On the day of the inspection, you were running a special school community breakfast to raise funds for cancer research.

Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This is because they visit regularly and know the school well. Governors keep their knowledge and skills up to date through regular training. They use their skills to keep a careful watch on the quality of the school culture and on pupils' progress. They provide a good level of challenge for leaders through well-targeted and challenging questioning at meetings.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school makes systematic and thorough checks on all staff, governors and volunteers. You have made sure that the site is safe and secure. Leaders and other staff are vigilant in spotting potential risks and they take action quickly to minimise them.

The school is strong in supporting pupils and their families when they are in significant need. You and your senior staff are dogged in pursuing external help for pupils and take action to provide support if there is a delay in securing expertise.

Parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, feel their children are safe. Pupils told me that they feel safe at school and that bullying is rare. They said that there is always an adult to turn to if they need help. They have a good awareness of when they may be at risk and how to manage this effectively, including the risks associated with gangs and the internet. Pupils also talk with good knowledge about staying healthy, both physically and mentally.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I met with you and your leadership team to discuss the school's progress since the previous inspection, as well as current standards and progress. We agreed the following lines of enquiry: how well leaders have increased progress rates in reading and writing for the most able by the end of key stage 2; how successful leaders have been in lowering the rate of exclusion and ensuring that behaviour is consistently good; and, lastly, how leaders have structured the curriculum so that it is broad and balanced and challenges the most able.
- Overall, St Cyprian's is a high-achieving school. For three consecutive years, you have exceeded the national averages in the following statutory assessments: early years children reaching a good level of development; Year 1 pupils achieving the required standard in the phonics screening check; pupils in Year 2 reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics; and, at the end of key stage 2, pupils achieving at or above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in 2018, the most able pupils did not make enough progress in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2. You have already addressed this concern in reading but there is still work to do in writing. You have made a good start to addressing this priority through your middle leaders working with teachers to raise their overall expectations. Middle leaders are also training teachers to use previous assessment information for the most able to set challenging tasks and, particularly, to apply their learning across subjects through problem-solving.
- Fixed-term exclusions were above the national average for three consecutive years from 2013 to 2016. Since 2017, they have dropped significantly and, by July 2018, were below the national average. This is because you have improved teachers' ability to differentiate lessons to meet the needs of all pupils, especially those who struggle to concentrate. You use external expertise well to help you determine the needs of pupils and you have trained staff to deal with incidents of poor behaviour. Overall, behaviour is good across the school, both in lessons and at playtimes. Pupils told me that children behave well in the school and the rules are clear. They said that teachers remind them of the rules when needed.
- The school places most emphasis on the teaching of core literacy and numeracy skills and this is reflected in your outcomes. You have enriched the curriculum through the teaching of the Greek language and other Greek cultural activities,

which include dancing, singing and Greek mythology. On the day of the review, I observed some language teaching and traditional dancing. You have begun to widen your curriculum further and there is evidence of this in pupils' books and on timetables. Pupils would, however, benefit from studying a wider range of topics in both history and geography if they are to be fully prepared for their secondary education.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they improve the progress of the most able pupils in writing between the end of key stages 1 and 2 by ensuring that teachers take account of their prior achievement when planning appropriately challenging tasks
- they improve the quality of the curriculum in history and geography so that pupils experience wider coverage, and more opportunities are provided for the most able to apply their learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Sir Robin Boshier
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and your senior leadership team to discuss the school's self-evaluation information, with a focus on pupils' progress and the improvements since the last inspection. We did several 'learning walks' through early years and key stages 1 and 2. We observed teaching and learning and looked at a range of pupils' work in books. I also scrutinised a number of pupils' topic books. I observed behaviour during lessons and at lunchtime. I met with pupils to find out about their experience of school and how safe they feel.

I had meetings with senior leaders and governors. I spoke on the telephone with the local authority school improvement partner. I looked at a range of written evidence, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, the single central record and other documents related to safeguarding, and the school's curriculum. I took account of the views of 56 parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text comments, and considered the views of parents I talked to at the fundraising breakfast. I also took account of the views of 36 members of staff who completed Ofsted's online staff survey.