

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Miss Sarah Curtis  
Headteacher  
Mayfield Church of England Primary School  
Fletching Street  
Mayfield  
East Sussex  
TN20 6TA

Dear Miss Curtis

### **Short inspection of Mayfield Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 15 December 2015, 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 2011.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have established a caring and supportive school community where strong relationships prevail. You welcome all families and provide close support when pupils move to the school from another. The school's values and the example set by you and your staff promote pupils' personal development very well. Older pupils act as buddies for the children who join the Reception class. Values such as compassion and generosity enable pupils of all ages to see how they can respect and care for each other. Pupils demonstrate this around the school. For example, at lunchtime, one older boy chatted to a young girl who was still eating at the table after her friends had left; despite being with his own friends, he involved her in the conversation and invited her to share a joke. Pupils recognise that they are kind to each other saying, 'We make friends quickly here'.

Since joining the school in 2013, you have focused on ensuring pupils achieve well. Pupils are making good progress, including those who join the school at different times from normal and with a range of skills and abilities. You have made changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage that have ensured the very large majority of children reach a good level of development and are well prepared for Year 1. Last year, the very large majority of pupils met the expected standard in the Year 1 check on knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make). Progress in reading and writing in Key Stage 2 is now more rapid because of better teaching.

You know that in 2015 pupils' achievement in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 dropped because a few pupils in the small class did not make good enough progress. Following careful examination of the reasons for this underachievement, the mathematics leader has already made some important changes. For example, analysis showed that these pupils found it difficult to recall facts to help them calculate. Therefore, pupils now have separate lessons to help them develop rapid recall of number facts and apply them to problems. Already, pupils across the school have made gains in this area of understanding.

The report on the last inspection referred to the need to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. You have clearly acted on this. Teachers make sure that written feedback helps pupils to understand what they need to do next. Pupils have time to respond to this feedback and make changes. Teachers have given pupils new books that set out incremental learning targets for reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are very excited about these targets and are already using them to decide their own next steps. Teachers ensure that pupils take time to reflect on their work and show the teacher that they have understood what is expected. Pupils in Key Stage 2 display 'challenge cards' to show their teacher how comfortable they are with their work. Pupils know their learning targets, how well they are doing and routinely evaluate their own learning.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You are proactive in ensuring that safeguarding policies, procedures and practice are the best that they can be. You carry out a regular audit of safeguarding and use this to plan improvements. For example, you have rightly identified the need to adapt internet safety teaching in the light of the new duty on schools to prevent radicalisation. You make sure that all staff receive timely safeguarding training and that sufficient staff members have additional safeguarding responsibilities. Governors also undertake regular training and monitor safeguarding practice in their meetings. The governor responsible for safeguarding routinely visits the school to ensure that all checks are in place and that leaders follow correctly the robust systems that are in place.

Pupils feel safe at school and appreciate the secure site. They were keen to explain that they must not climb over the top of their new climbing wall! Almost all parents think that their child is safe at school. Pupils' attendance has increased this term and is currently above the national average. This is because you have set high expectations and challenge families appropriately to make sure that pupils attend well.

### **Inspection findings**

- You rightly place great importance on securing high-quality teaching and learning. Senior and middle leaders regularly check the quality of teaching,

learning and assessment across all subjects. You have put in place effective appraisal to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress and identify appropriate training needs. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants receive valuable support that develops their skills and knowledge. The staff team is committed to improving pupils' achievement and work well together to help achieve your ambitious aims.

- Leaders use pupils' progress information well to identify what needs to be improved. Wisely, you draw support from the local authority to ensure that your evaluation of the school's effectiveness is correct. All leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The school development plan addresses comprehensively all of the areas that you have identified for improvement. For example, you rightly recognise that some of the disadvantaged pupils need extra support with learning. You have information from national research to identify that mentoring could enable these pupils to be more successful. The plan is detailed and includes some targets for pupils' progress to allow you to measure the impact of your work. Nevertheless, the school development plan does not set out clearly enough the steps in progress that you expect different groups of pupils to make as a result of these changes over time. Therefore, although governors evaluate the plan, they cannot check precisely the impact of this work.
- Governors describe the school as more outward-looking since your arrival. This is demonstrated by the engaging opportunities teachers have received to develop their expertise and drive further improvements. For example, the Year 6 teacher has worked well with teachers from other schools in a local authority project. This enabled teachers in school to improve the feedback that they give pupils and ensure that pupils use it to take the next steps in their learning. Initially, the project focused on writing. Pupils' achievement in writing increased as a result. Teachers now use this approach to feedback consistently across all subjects.
- You make provision to ensure that all pupils can succeed in the school community. Last year, you established a nurture class to provide extra social and emotional support for a group of pupils. These pupils are thriving and incidents of poor behaviour have reduced. Pupils behave well throughout the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive additional support that is well matched to their abilities and contributes to their good progress. This is also the case for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Teachers regularly review this support and make adjustments to further enhance learning.
- Teachers have secure knowledge of the subjects that they teach and use this well to check pupils' understanding. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and use a wide vocabulary to effectively extend pupils' learning. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher would not accept 'corners', rightly waiting for the correct term 'vertices' to be given.
- Teaching in the early years prepares children very well for Year 1 and ensures children's early reading skills are well developed. In the Reception class, the teacher shared a book, *Old MacDonald's Farm*. The teacher sang the song and

the children delighted in joining in. The teacher seized every opportunity to practise phonics and made links to the many reading and writing activities that the children had enjoyed that morning. Throughout the school, a continual focus on phonics and reading for understanding ensures that all pupils achieve well in reading. Attainment and progress in reading at the end of Year 6 is high.

- Pupils' work books show that they have lots of opportunities to practise writing at length. Pupils write for a range of reasons and particularly enjoy work that relates to books that they read. For example, Year 4 pupils said that have read a 'brilliant' book called *The Snow Merchant*. Pupils write well across a range of subjects. However, the quality of presentation of pupils' work is variable.
- Children in the early years achieve well in mathematics. Adults ensure that there are activities inside and outside that promote mathematical development. Adults ask children challenging questions to extend their thinking. For example, one child had saved a cookie with 10 chocolate chips for visitors. The teaching assistant asked her to explain why she chose that one. The child said, 'Because it has the most chocolate chips, of course!' The adult was quick to follow up with a question about which cookie the visitors would be least likely to choose.
- You are keen to build on children's strong starting points in mathematics. The mathematics leader has recently introduced a new approach to teaching. In Key Stage 1, teachers secure all pupils' learning in a topic before moving on. As a result, the very large majority of Key stage 1 pupils are on track to reach the expected standard in mathematics. In Key Stage 2, teachers ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to solve problems and practise reasoning. There are three levels of challenging work in mathematics lessons. Pupils like choosing work as 'explorers', 'voyagers' or 'discoverers' and show that they can select work that is suitably demanding. Consequently, after a dip in 2015, the very large majority of pupils are now on track to achieve the level expected for their age and some pupils are exceeding this.
- Governors have made changes to the way that they work to increase their effectiveness. There are fewer governors and information is shared better. Governors regularly audit their skills and engage in training so that they can carry out their roles with confidence. Governors are ambitious for the school and provide rigorous challenge and support to leaders.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and governors should:

- ensure pupils' achievement in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with or above national expectations
- set milestones for different groups of pupils' progress so governors can measure impact of the school development plan more accurately
- improve the quality of presentation in pupils' work books.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for East Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Dulon  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, the assistant headteacher and mathematics leader, teachers and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. I spoke to a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese of Chichester by telephone. We observed teaching and learning in six classes. We scrutinised pupils' work together. I observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and around the school. I spoke to pupils about their experiences and views of school. I took account of 54 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 12 responses to the staff questionnaire. I also spoke to 10 parents at the start of the day. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including information about pupils' achievement, the school improvement plan, safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. We discussed your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness.