

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



5 July 2016

Mrs Emma Pepper
Headteacher
St Botolph's Church of England Primary School
Loughborough Road
Shepshed
Leicestershire
LE12 9DN

Dear Mrs Pepper

Short inspection of St Botolph's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 May 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 March 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 promote a highly ambitious culture that is captured in the motto 'new day...endless possibilities'. Your approach, strongly supported by senior and middle leaders, is raising the aspiration of all staff and pupils to be their very best. You explain that your ambition is to ensure that your pupils' potential is not just achieved, but is enlarged.

Your extremely high expectations for all staff and pupils are ensuring that the school continues to improve. The desire of all leaders and governors to be outstanding is clear. There is no sense of complacency. You have worked very effectively within a local collaborative trust of schools to ensure that staff can share skills and ideas with each other. You arrange for headteachers from these schools to visit St Botolph's to confirm your judgement of teaching across the school, and that the assessments your staff make of the pupils' outcomes are robust.

The governing body are also very ambitious for the school and play an effective strategic role in ensuring the school gets better and better. Since the last inspection, they have improved the way that they challenge you and your senior leaders, and now hold you rigorously to account for all aspects of the school's provision and pupils' outcomes. Your arrangements for the performance management of staff, and their checking by governors, are highly effective.

As a result of your leadership, morale is high and staff have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve further. Parents too are highly supportive of the school. Almost all of those who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, say that you lead the school well, and every parent who responded would recommend St Botolph's to others. One parent explained, for example, 'my children have loved every minute of their time' and another that the school is 'amazing' and 'prepares her children for life'.

Children enter the school with levels of development that are below those typically found in children of the same age. Information you provided during the inspection shows that pupils are making consistently good progress from their starting points. As a result, around four out of five pupils are currently on track to leave the school having reached the expectations for their age, and around one in three pupils are exceeding these. During my visit, I checked pupils' progress over time by examining a large amount of their work. This shows convincingly that pupils are making good gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are learning to write with increasing confidence and skill, and they display impressive levels of creativity. For example, one Year 5 pupil had written, 'Inquisitively, Steve silently stepped into nature's paradise while scanning for pigeons'. They are also able to use and apply their mathematical skills accurately, with pupils in Year 2 adding two-digit numbers and Year 5 pupils comparing fractions, or converting them into decimals and percentages. Some pupils, such as the most able, are making rapid gains. Pupils' work confirms that you have also addressed the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection effectively. Pupils complete a good amount of work neatly and can write at length in many styles. They are also proficient in completing a good amount of mathematical calculations. Pupils I met during my visit told me how teachers make it very clear to them what they are learning, ensure that the work they receive is challenging and that teachers give them clear targets that help them improve.

In the previous two years, a much lower proportion of children who were disadvantaged achieved a good level of development at the end of the early years, compared to disadvantaged pupils nationally. In addition, the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school at the end of Year 2 did not close, but widened for two successive years. Many of these were pupils whose circumstances made them vulnerable, or who had special educational needs or disability. Nevertheless, these pupils made good progress from their starting points. Information on pupils' current progress shows that, in most year groups and subjects, but not all, gaps are closing. Although your website contains information on how you have spent the pupil premium money to help these pupils, it does not give a sufficiently detailed or fully accurate picture of the impact of this spending. Parents cannot see the impact of teachers' work on narrowing the gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others.

Overall absence, and persistent absence, have been below the national average for the past three years, and continue to be so. However, published information shows that a much higher proportion of pupils who were believed to be eligible for free school meals, and pupils with special educational needs or disability who the school have classified as requiring 'SEN support', were persistently absent in the previous

two years. These pupils also had lower attendance than similar pupils nationally. Although you have now ensured these groups of pupils are attending well, their absence from school meant these pupils could not previously make as much progress as they should have done.

Safeguarding is effective.

Nothing is more important to you, staff and the governing body than the protection of your pupils. Parents who responded to Parent View unanimously believe that their children are safe in school. Pupils I met during my visit told me how teachers tell them about different risks they may encounter, such as strangers and roads, and about how they can protect themselves while on the internet or if they use a mobile phone. They were keen to say that they felt safe at St Botolph's.

You ensure that staff are continually updated in their training, including in areas of recent national concern, such as extremism. As a result, staff are confident in knowing the warning signs that may suggest a pupil is being harmed. They are also very clear in understanding the procedure they must follow to report any concern. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You keep meticulous records of any safeguarding concerns that staff have. The sample of files I examined during my visit showed that you do not hesitate in making referrals to external agencies quickly where they are needed.

Inspection findings

- You and your senior leadership team have ensured that St Botolph's offers a high-quality education for all its pupils. The calm working atmosphere in classrooms promotes pupils' good progress, and teachers model very high expectations and standards of behaviour. As a result, pupils work hard and are very polite and considerate. They pay attention in class and cooperate with each other very well. I saw no disruption to learning whatsoever during my visit.
- Parents express high levels of support for your leadership and all aspects of the school. Staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey were also very positive, explaining how the school is aspirational for all pupils and how they have a clear understanding of what the school is trying to achieve.
- You are ensuring that subject leaders check the quality of teaching in lessons, as well as by talking to pupils and by looking at pupils' work in their books. Subject leaders report their findings back to you and to the governing body to ensure that any weaknesses are quickly addressed.
- Processes for managing the performance of staff are excellent. You ensure that all staff are given appropriate targets to improve, along with good-quality support to improve their skills. The work of the governing body is very effective in checking this, along with holding you and other senior leaders to account. Governors fulfil their role well and are highly committed to the school.
- Your new system for tracking pupils' outcomes is providing a detailed level of information that you are using well to identify the progress of different groups and cohorts. This shows that pupils are making good progress from their starting points, which are below those typically found in children of the same

age. Published information shows that, over the past five years, pupils' attainment at Year 2 has either been significantly above, or broadly in line with, the national average. Most pupils leave the school at the end of Year 5 with at least the skills expected for their age, with a good proportion showing a deeper understanding in the topics they have been taught.

- Pupils' work I saw during my visit confirms their good progress over time. Teachers plan work for them that is well matched to their needs, and builds on what pupils already know. Pupils are industrious, with accurate spelling and neat handwriting. They complete both written and mathematical work proudly. Relationships between adults and pupils are mutually respectful and warm, and teachers give pupils very clear guidance on what they are expected to learn and how to improve. Teachers set the most able pupils particularly challenging work and books show that, as a result, these pupils are making rapid progress.
- Pupils have a good understanding of phonics. This helps them to write well, and at length, across the curriculum from an early age. Teachers note quickly when pupils are not making sufficient progress and help them to catch up. Historically, the proportion of Year 1 pupils who have passed the phonics screening check has been above the national average. The proportion expected to pass this year is also set to be above the previous national average.
- Staff give disadvantaged pupils good support that has a positive impact on their learning. Considerable proportions of these pupils have special educational needs or disability, or have circumstances that make them potentially vulnerable. As a result, many of these pupils have particularly low starting points. Although most disadvantaged pupils are making at least as much or greater progress than other pupils, not all gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils have yet closed.
- The curriculum is lively, balanced and broad. Pupils I met say that teachers make lessons interesting. For example, pupils study local history, visiting Bosworth battlefield to learn about Richard III. The curriculum is enhanced well with a wide variety of clubs, such as gardening, choir and archery. Pupils know how to eat healthily and the importance of staying fit.
- Many high-quality displays around the school celebrate pupils' work and show how they are taught about fundamental British values, such as respect for other cultures. The school's religious ethos means that pupils become reflective and thoughtful young people who want to help others. For example, some of the pupils I met were members of the 'Rota Kids' club and were very keen to tell me how they were raising money for a charity to help other children, by growing tomatoes and cucumbers.
- Pupils told me that incidents of bullying and name-calling are rare in school and, when they occur, that staff quickly deal with them. They say that they trust any member of staff to help them if they have a concern.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the remaining gaps between the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and others close as quickly as possible

- the school website contains sufficient detail for parents regarding the impact of the spending of the pupil premium on closing those gaps.

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

Yours sincerely

Roary Pownall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the representatives of the governing body and senior and subject leaders. We visited all year groups to observe learning. I looked extensively at pupils' work across the school. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and met with groups of them at breaktime. I considered the views of 48 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, alongside the school's most recent questionnaire. I read a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, plans for further school development and information on outcomes for pupils currently in the school. I visited the breakfast club, which is maintained by the governing body, to check that pupils were safe. I studied information related to attendance, and anonymised examples of teachers' appraisal, and examined safeguarding records and policies. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information. I looked at the range of views expressed through Ofsted's questionnaires by staff and pupils.