

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



21 July 2016

Mr Oliver Johnson
Executive Headteacher
Boddington Church of England Academy
Church Road
Upper Boddington
Daventry
Northamptonshire
NN11 6DL

Dear Mr Johnson

Short inspection of Boddington Church of England Academy

Following my visit to the school on 7 June 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection of its predecessor school. You took up the post of executive headteacher of Boddington Church of England Academy and Culworth Church of England Academy at Easter 2016 and have made a positive start to the role. You have formulated a view of the school and identified appropriate priorities for improvement. The governors and leaders managed the transition from the previous substantive headship well. They appointed an experienced headteacher in an interim capacity across the federation and secured additional support from the multi-academy trust's school improvement partner.

This is a small friendly village school that cares for each individual pupil and develops their confidence well. Pupils are excited to come into school after a holiday to find out about the new topics they will be learning. Pupils whom I met with described the school as 'awesome' and 'amazing'.

Pupils are happy and their behaviour is good. In lessons, pupils are attentive and keen to learn. At playtime, pupils play well together using a range of equipment, or sit and chat with their friends. There is a playground friendship bench and if a pupil sits at it alone, pupils are quick to go over and see if they can help. Pupils were eager to engage me in conversation. They are obviously proud of their school and keen for it to be seen as a great school. However, one or two of them said that

although teachers are quick to deal with poor behaviour, in a very few cases they do not always do so effectively. This can lead to a repeat of the poor behaviour, which leaves the pupils feeling frustrated.

Pupils and parents say that teachers are friendly and helpful. Communication is good. Pupils told me that teachers always listen to them, and the vast majority of parents say that they are well informed and know how well their child is doing. Leaders and teachers have improved the quality of the early years provision since the last inspection, and have strengthened the way in which they assess children's starting points when children enter the early years. However, parents are not involved enough in this initial assessment and this risks some children's abilities and needs not being recognised, and consequently built on, early enough.

Leaders and governors know the school well and know the areas of the school that they need to improve. However, they do not make sufficient use of published performance information and the school's own data to inform their evaluations, hold colleagues to account or further raise teachers' expectations with regard to pupils' progress. In addition, leaders and governors have not ensured that they have fulfilled their statutory duties and as a result have not:

- evaluated the impact of the physical education (PE) and sport funding for 2014/15
- implemented the statutory guidance related to the education of children who are looked after by the local authority.

Safeguarding is effective.

The designated leaders for safeguarding ensure that staff are kept well informed about their duties to keep pupils safe. As a result, staff are alert to any signs that a child may be at risk of harm. Staff also know what to do if they have concerns about a child's welfare. You and the safeguarding leaders have ensured that staff understand their legal responsibilities with regard to the 'Prevent' duty. Staff are due to complete online training shortly to further enhance their understanding of the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation. Leaders ensure that all staff update their training annually and that governors are kept well informed about the school's safeguarding policies and practice.

Procedures to ensure that any visitors to the school are signed in and then supervised are effective. You and the office staff have ensured that the single central record of the checks and vetting of all staff working with pupils is complete and up to date.

The pupils I spoke with told me that they are happy at school and feel safe. Pupils explained to me how staff keep them safe and teach them how to stay safe. Pupils said that teachers help them to know about the risks they face and how to protect themselves from dangers, through lessons on topics such as e-safety and courses such as 'bikeability'. All the parents I met with and all those who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that their children are safe and happy at

school. You monitor attendance closely and intervene effectively when attendance declines. Consequently, attendance is good.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors took prompt and appropriate action to address the areas for improvement identified in the most recent inspection of the predecessor school. Consequently, they have secured improvements in teaching, the early years and in the quality of subject leadership.
- Since the last inspection, the monitoring of teaching has been strengthened. Teachers receive good-quality feedback about their teaching together with appropriate training to support their development. Where necessary, teachers have received one-to-one support. As a result, teaching has improved. Teachers are skilled in building pupils' subject-specific vocabulary. They monitor how well pupils are learning in lessons and intervene when pupils need additional support or challenge. Consequently, pupils make strong progress.
- Teachers engage pupils well in their learning using a range of strategies and techniques. In each class, adults use teaching catchphrases such as 'magnetic eyes on me' and strategies such as 'maths tennis' to hold the pupils' attention while they explain a key point or question pupils to gauge their understanding. Teachers are creative in devising strategies to capture pupils' interest, for example by using play dough to demonstrate a key concept or by making deliberate mistakes to make sure that pupils are paying attention and to deepen their conceptual understanding.
- Leaders ensure that teachers consistently follow the school's marking and feedback policy. This supports the effective guidance and explanations that adults provide for pupils and the strong progress that pupils make.
- Leaders and teachers have implemented the revised national curriculum well. Leaders have also developed an assessment and tracking system with the multi-academy trust that enables teachers and leaders to effectively evaluate the progress pupils make, and intervene with support if pupils are at risk of falling behind.
- In addition, leaders and teachers have worked well with colleagues from Culworth Church of England Academy and other schools in the trust to moderate teachers' assessments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable. This enables you to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress, and provides governors with the information they need to challenge and support the school. However, the effectiveness of governors' monitoring is weakened because they do not use published performance information to benchmark the school's performance against national standards, or to check the reliability of the school's own performance information.
- Leaders have taken appropriate action to help improve pupils' progress in mathematics. The school's curriculum has been revised to ensure that pupils receive more opportunities to develop their mathematical skills, and teachers have received additional training in mathematics teaching. You have also employed a skilled mathematics teacher to work with the most able pupils in Years 5 and 6 across the federation. It is too early to determine if this is resulting in sustained improvements to pupils' progress.

- Leaders and governors have improved provision for the Reception children in the mixed-aged Reception/Year 1 class. They have appointed an experienced early years teacher to teach this class to ensure that the needs of the Reception-age children are well met. This appointment has also helped to strengthen the knowledge and skills of other staff who work with children in the early years. Leaders and teachers have improved the learning environment, inside and outside the classroom, so that children can play and learn independently. They have provided many more opportunities for children to develop their writing and mathematical skills.
- Leaders and teachers have reviewed the assessment arrangements for the early years. They have introduced a new baseline assessment process and a new assessment record that enables them to track children's progress effectively. However, the initial assessment does not involve parents sufficiently. This can have a limiting effect on the judgements, and risks some of the children's skills, knowledge or attitudes not being recognised and, consequently, quickly built on.
- Leaders and governors have taken effective action to improve subject leadership. You have reviewed leadership roles across the federation schools and organised shared middle leadership across the two schools. This is a significant development and has increased the middle leadership capacity of the school. It also provides middle leaders with additional support through joint working, for example in monitoring and assessing pupils' work, developing policies and guidance, and training across the multi-academy trust.
- As a result of these developments, subject leaders are knowledgeable about their subjects and their pupils. They are able to refer to pupils' books to explain confidently and accurately their view of pupils' progress and achievement. In addition, English and mathematics leaders challenge and support teachers by using pupils' performance information, summative assessments and the progress grids in each pupil's book to identify gaps in learning. However, middle leaders do not make sufficient use of published information to benchmark the school's performance against other schools nationally.
- Pupils achieve well at the school. Over the past three years combined, they have achieved above the national average at key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. Similarly, key stage 2 pupils have attained above the national average in reading and writing and close to the national average in mathematics.
- The school's performance information and the small sample of pupils' work I scrutinised during the inspection show that pupils are currently making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, most pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are on track to achieve or exceed the standards expected for their age. They are making strong progress from their starting points.
- Pupils in Year 1 consistently achieve well in phonics. This year, all the Year 1 pupils met the expected standard in the phonics screening check.

- In 2015, the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development by the end of the early years was below the national average, despite pupils making strong progress from their starting points. Currently, the proportion of pupils in the Reception class on track to achieve a good level of development is broadly in line with the 2015 national average. Those who are not on track have made strong progress given their needs and starting points.
- Overall, leaders and governors know the school well. Their evaluation of the school's performance identifies the right areas for improvement. The school improvement plan is equally detailed and sets out the actions you intend to take to secure improvements. However, the targets and success criteria contained within the plan are not specific enough about the impact you expect the actions to have on pupils' outcomes or the standards of teaching. As a result, governors concentrate unduly on the implementation of actions, rather than the effect they have had, when they hold leaders to account.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- parents are fully involved in the assessment of their children when they start school
- the school's self-evaluation includes the necessary performance information so that governors can hold leaders and teachers to account more effectively
- middle leaders use published performance information to evaluate standards in their subjects more effectively
- they evaluate the impact of PE and sports funding in terms of pupils' participation and attainment in PE and sports
- the statutory guidance for the education of children looked after by the local authority is fully implemented.

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

Yours sincerely

Derek Myers
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your senior teacher, the English and mathematics leaders, the business manager, the pastoral leader, the chair of the governing body, the vice-chair of the governing body and the school improvement partner. I also met with members of staff and considered the responses to the staff survey. I reviewed the school's self-evaluation document and the improvement plan.

You and I visited classrooms and learning areas to observe teaching, talk to pupils and look at their work. I evaluated information about pupils' progress, attendance and exclusion. I observed and talked with pupils in their classes, and met with six pupils. I met with you and the two designated safeguarding leaders, and reviewed your systems and processes relating to safeguarding. We looked at work from a sample of pupils. I met with a number of parents at the beginning of the school day and considered their views alongside the responses from Parent View. I also reviewed the school's website.