

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



29 July 2016

Mr Ellyatt  
St David's Church of England Primary School  
East Street  
Moreton-in-Marsh  
Gloucestershire  
GL56 0LQ

Dear Mr Ellyatt

### **Short inspection of St David's Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 July 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 November 2012.

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

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

Following your appointment in September 2015, you quickly identified the areas that required further improvement. Together with strong support from your deputy headteacher and governors, you have taken the urgent actions needed to ensure that pupils make faster progress, particularly in the early years and in writing across the school. You have faced challenges, particularly relating to changes in staffing. However, you demonstrate a determination and ambition to raise standards and ensure that every child succeeds at St David's.

You have a realistic and accurate understanding of the school's current performance. The school's action plans, including those drawn up by your middle leaders, set out what needs to be improved further. You are being ably supported in this work by your leaders and governors. They are fully committed to implementing the changes to ensure that the school continues to improve. Minutes from governing body meetings confirm that governors have provided a greater level of challenge this year in response to the fall in standards in 2015. Although pupils' outcomes in English and mathematics have significantly improved across the school this year, you are not complacent and recognise there is further work to do. Leaders and governors demonstrate the capacity for further improvement.

The previous inspection report identified the need to improve standards in

mathematics, particularly in Years 3 to 6. As a result of the strong focus on developing pupils' calculation and problem-solving skills, standards in mathematics have risen. Teachers challenge the most able pupils to ensure that they reach the highest standards. During the inspection, pupils demonstrated perseverance and strong attitudes to learning, particularly when solving problems that challenged their thinking. Pupils' attainment in mathematics has increased and is now above the national average at the end of Year 6.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your governors place a high priority on keeping pupils safe. As a result, there is a strong culture of effective safeguarding in the school. Staff receive the appropriate training to be able to recognise the signs of possible risk or harm. Consequently, they understand their role in ensuring that pupils are well cared for and looked after in school. The work of the parent support adviser is effective in providing high-quality support to families. As a result, attendance for the most vulnerable pupils has improved this year. Parents told the inspector about the high levels of care both they and their children receive from staff. 'The teachers are wonderful. My child has come on in leaps and bounds', is typical of comments received during the inspection. In addition, staff and governors have received training on the 'Prevent' duty. As a result, they have a good understanding of how to protect pupils from the risk of exposure to extreme views and opinions.

You and your governors carry out all recruitment checks and procedures with great care. All staff are rigorously checked before beginning their work at the school, including those who have worked overseas. Staff ensure that pupils receive guidance in keeping safe when using the internet. In discussions during the inspection, pupils demonstrated a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe when online.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that detailed and high-quality records are maintained.

### **Inspection findings**

- Since taking up your appointment in September 2015, you have taken decisive and urgent action to improve pupils' achievement and progress, particularly in the early years and in writing across the school. Firstly, you swiftly identified the need to increase standards in phonics (the sounds that letters make). Standards in 2015 dipped below the national average, having been broadly average in 2014. You immediately set about strengthening the focus given to the teaching of letters and sounds. Your subject leader for English has provided the training staff need to ensure that pupils learn successfully. Effective teaching now begins in early years. This work provides children with the strong foundations they need to learn to read and write well. Pupils in early years and in Years 1 and 2 now benefit from high-quality teaching, led by teachers and teaching assistants with strong subject knowledge. Consequently, outcomes in reading and writing in early years and in Year 1 have significantly improved this year. The proportion of

pupils achieving the Year 1 phonics check in June 2016 is well above the national average. All pupils in Year 2 who did not achieve the expected level in the Year 1 phonics check in 2015 have now reached the required standard. This includes pupils new to the school, disadvantaged pupils and a small group of boys.

- You have focused relentlessly on improving the teaching of writing across the school to raise standards. In particular, you identified that the achievement and progress of boys and disadvantaged pupils in this subject were not good enough. Staff now carefully link subjects through exciting themes such as 'the builders' yard' in early years and 'the rainforest' in Year 5. These topics have successfully engaged the boys and the more reluctant writers. In addition, staff use high-quality texts, such as 'The Secret Garden' and 'George's Marvellous Medicine' to ensure that all pupils, but especially the boys, are motivated and inspired to write well. Similarly, the school's focus on planning work to stretch and challenge pupils' learning is enabling a greater proportion of the most able pupils to make faster progress and achieve higher standards. Work in books and the school's information confirm that pupils are making faster progress in writing.
- Outcomes at the end of Year 6 in 2016 have improved. Work in pupils' theme books confirms that teachers expect pupils to write at length using their literacy skills in other subjects. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 wrote explanations in science of how the eye works, to develop their scientific vocabulary. In addition, the unacceptably wide gaps between girls and boys that were previously seen are closing. However, leaders agree there continues to be some variability in the quality of teaching in writing across the school. On occasion, pupils' presentation is untidy and the teachers' expectations are not always high enough. Consequently, pupils' progress is less rapid where this occurs.
- Provision for children in early years has significantly improved this year. Staff carefully plan exciting learning opportunities to develop all areas of children's learning. Skilful questioning by teachers supports the children to develop their reasoning and thinking. The recently developed and well-resourced outdoor area supports children's learning effectively. As a result, outcomes have significantly improved this year, notably in writing.
- The school's decision to employ the special educational needs leader for three days each week is having a positive impact on raising standards. The school welcomes a significant number of new pupils during the academic year. Staff assiduously assess their needs quickly and provide support to close identified gaps in learning. In particular, pupils who need to catch up with reading receive precisely focused support to develop fluency and comprehension skills. The school's information confirms that this group of pupils make rapid progress from their starting points. Other pupils who read to the inspector used their knowledge of letters and sounds very effectively to read unknown words. They spoke enthusiastically about the books they read at home and at school, demonstrating a keen interest in reading.
- Middle leaders are new to their roles but very committed to leading improvement in their subjects. With the support of the deputy headteacher, these leaders have developed a good understanding of what is working well

and what is needed to improve their subjects. They are growing in confidence and use pupil progress information to hold teachers to account and lead further improvements. In addition, they are working more closely with the governors linked to their subjects. This ensures that the governing body is well informed and able to challenge leaders for further gains. However, leaders confirm the importance and urgency in continuing to develop the role of middle leaders to improve further the school's performance.

- The parent support adviser works closely with families to support individual pupils. In particular, this member of staff has successfully tackled the urgent need to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with specific needs, including special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result of this work, attendance for these pupils has significantly risen and is now just above the national average. In addition, parents spoke highly of the care and support the school provides at times of need.
- Governors make a strong contribution to the work of the school. They increasingly provide both the support and challenge to leaders to ensure that the school continues to improve. They visit the school regularly and have an in-depth understanding of the impact of leaders' actions. They use their considerable skills, which they bring to the governing body, to ask searching questions to check on the impact of agreed actions. This is supporting the school to improve quickly. Nonetheless, the school's monitoring records are not always sharply focused on checking the learning and progress of specific groups of pupils, to enable leaders to plan precisely further improvement.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The school's Christian distinctiveness supports pupils to develop strong values such as respect and tolerance for others. This is particularly evident in their willingness to help others and raise considerable amounts of money for charities both in this country and abroad.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- monitoring activities focus sharply on the learning and progress of different groups so that leaders can precisely plan further improvement
- subject leaders new to their roles receive the training and support they need to drive further improvement in their subjects
- the teaching of writing is of a consistently high quality across the school so that all pupils learn effectively and make good progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Leahy  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, a group of governors and parents at the start of the school day. I spoke to the chair of the governing body by telephone. I spoke with pupils throughout the day, including at breaktimes and in lessons. I looked at a wide range of evidence relating to safeguarding, the quality of teaching, assessment information and the school's analysis of attendance records. In addition, I scrutinised the work in pupils' books in a range of subjects. I took account of 40 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 34 responses to the staff questionnaire. In addition, responses received by text from parents were taken into account.