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Kathryn Waters
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Dear Ms Waters

Short inspection of Dame Tipping Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 October 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 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 took on the leadership of the school in September 2014 and have successfully overseen a period of change and development. You have managed staff turnover in the last two years, making sure that teaching, pupils' outcomes and behaviour have remained good. Leaders and governors have made sure that key priorities for improvement from the last inspection have been addressed.

You have maintained the school's nurturing, kind and caring environment and have also strengthened its Christian character. Pupils say that they enjoy being part of a small community. They are thoughtful and attentive and told me that they like coming to school because learning is fun. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and are polite and friendly. They understand and can explain the school core values well. They enjoy getting certificates and enthuse about the many outings and visits that the school organises. The variety of extra-curricular clubs that pupils can choose, such as violin and football, promote their interests and are very popular. You have made sure that pupils learn a broad and balanced range of subjects, which includes French, taught by a specialist teacher. A particular highlight that pupils mention is the Forest Schools programme, encouraging the development of their confidence and self-esteem in the outdoor environment nearby.

You do not accept anything other than the best for pupils and have taken action to raise standards, including, for example, bringing in new teachers to strengthen the staff team. You set high standards and place a premium on training to improve practice. You have increased the use of assessment so that teachers prepare suitably challenging work for pupils of all abilities. You have also established practices which routinely encourage pupils to think deeply. For example, pupils now work freely in pairs and groups, questioning and challenging each other. This was not the case at the time of the last inspection.

You have made sure that additional funding is used carefully to promote the learning of disadvantaged pupils so that they make similar progress in reading, writing and mathematics to other pupils at the school and nationally. This is celebrated by the fact that the school is a Pupil Premium Award local winner. Those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from additional support that is carefully tailored to their individual needs. They also make strong progress in their learning. Although the most able pupils make good gains, you are aware that teachers' expectations of the most able are not always high enough across the school.

The areas for improvement raised at the last inspection have all been addressed. Nevertheless, there are some areas where further work is needed. For example, the majority of governors are new to their roles. Some of them have yet to develop their skills and knowledge so that they can carry out their functions effectively.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has checked carefully that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of a high quality. As a result of regular training, staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of up-to-date guidance and procedures. This includes recognising possible warning signs that a pupil may be at risk of, for example, female genital mutilation or radicalisation. Leaders have made sure that pupils know who to speak to if they have any safeguarding concerns. Pupils have a clear understanding of measures they can take to keep themselves safe from harm, for example when using computers and social media or game sites. They are confident that adults at the school will help them very swiftly should any problems occur. The governing body checks all safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements are fit for purpose. However, governors accept the need to build up their experience and confidence in this important area.

Inspection findings

- You measure and check the quality of the school's work and identify where the school can do better. The test results of 2016 threw up some challenges. You moved swiftly at the start of term to put in place measures to address weaknesses in pupils' writing, which have already had a marked effect. Pupils' rates of progress in writing this term have been rapid. This improvement is based on the improved use of assessment, more ambitious targets and more focused teaching. You are aware of the need to be

vigilant to ensure that all pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged, stay on track and consistently fulfil their potential.

- In September 2015 you appointed a new and energetic teacher for your youngest pupils in the Reception class. Up until this appointment, standards in that year group had been falling: in July 2015 the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development was below the national average. However, in July 2016, this proportion had risen sharply. As is the case in the rest of the school, advances have been based on the improved use of assessment and more focused teaching. For example, the teaching of letters and sounds in Reception is engaging and effective. These advances are to be celebrated, although you accept that there is still more to be done. In particular, you agree that higher expectations need to be set for the most able, so that more pupils reach the highest levels.
- Your warm and welcoming child-centred assembly highlighted aspects of tolerance and Christian values – key features of the ethos of the school. Pupils were engaged and responded well when they were given the opportunity to talk and share their experiences.
- Effective leadership has sustained the school's good overall effectiveness since the last inspection despite many changes in staff, including at senior level. For example, since becoming headteacher of the school, you have worked hard to improve attendance and taken robust action. This has resulted in attendance rising from 93.5% three years ago to 96.3% in 2016. However, there are a small group of pupils who do not attend school as well as they should. Your success in raising attendance since your appointment has encouraged you to focus your efforts on this group.
- The great majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire were very happy with the school. There was a small minority who felt that the school could do more regarding incidents of misbehaviour. However, throughout the day I did not notice any untoward behaviour and found the school to be a very orderly, happy environment.
- Many governors are new to their roles. They play an active part in the school and want to be as supportive as they can. They accept the need to focus their activities closely on key aspects of their duties.
- New staff have received effective induction with all of the school's procedures. They understand their duties regarding keeping children safe. They know what needs to be done if they have any concerns.
- Pupils from all backgrounds enjoy reading and read well. Younger pupils use the phonics strategies they learn at school to decode words they do not know confidently. Older children read with fluency and expression and their comprehension is above that expected for their age. Reading records confirm that they read widely and often and are well supported at home.
- All of the children I spoke to said that they feel safe and that they have learned what to do if they have any worries. They told me that occasionally there are some incidents of misbehaviour but that these are rare and dealt with swiftly. Pupils are motivated to learn and get on well with each other. The school is a tolerant and supportive community and pupils describe with pleasure how happy they are to be among their friends. Their attitudes reflect the values of the school very well.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is detailed monitoring of the attendance of groups of pupils in order to identify any trends or patterns in absence and take necessary action
- in the Reception class expectations for the most able are raised so that more pupils achieve higher levels
- all governors conduct rigorous checks on the school's safeguarding procedures.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Roberts
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I focused on four main activities: the progress of the most able, Reception class, attendance and safeguarding procedures. I met you, your deputy and four governors, including the chair of the governing body. I held meetings with middle leaders, teachers new to the school and other staff. I visited classes from Reception to Year 6 to observe teaching and learning and looked at pupils' work. I heard pupils reading. I spoke to pupils in lessons and around the school and also met a group of pupils from across the school. I observed an assembly. I evaluated recent information about pupils' progress and attendance information. I considered the views and written comments of 35 parents from Parent View and a survey of staff views.