

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs C Grant
Headteacher
Goodleigh Church of England Primary School
Goodleigh
Barnstaple
Devon
EX32 7LU

Dear Mrs Grant

Short inspection of Goodleigh Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 November 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 May 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Indeed, you are now sharing your good practice with another school with which you have formed a federation and where you are also the headteacher. Since the last inspection of Goodleigh, you have overseen a significant increase in the number of pupils attending this small primary school. There are currently four mixed-age classes. Some pupils come from the village and surrounding countryside. Most come from further afield because the school has a well-deserved reputation for the quality of its provision, including for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You also provide some 'flexi-schooling' for a few pupils who are educated at home for part of the week. This is why your attendance figures appear low for these pupils. You have successfully created a culture in which all pupils are welcomed, cared for and nurtured, both academically and in their personal development.

Parents value the ethos of the school, which they describe as developing their children's love of learning. They praise the dedication of the teachers and teaching assistants, for example in providing a wide range of activities for pupils. These include after-school clubs, with various sports offered, and educational trips and activities. All pupils in key stage 2 are included in two annual musical productions. One is a performance of a Shakespearian play, which this year was 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Pupils also perform in the local church. You make excellent use of the extensive school grounds, including

an improvised amphitheatre and the 'forest school', where children learn to work together, as in making shelters in the woodland area. It was a delight to see brothers and sisters from different year groups working together, applying their measuring skills in making Christmas cakes for their families. Pupils learn about other faiths, as in celebrating Diwali, for example. Such activities and trips, including a visit to the Royal Opera House, make an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They also motivate the staff, who are as enthusiastic as the pupils about the extended learning opportunities.

In most classes, teachers now make good use of assessment to ensure that each pupil works at the right level of challenge. This is particularly effective in key stage 2, where pupils make rapid progress. You are rightly extending the skills of new teachers to secure a consistently strong quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. To support the new teachers in matching the work closely to each pupil's starting point, you are developing a new system for tracking the progress of all pupils.

Pupils get off to a flying start in the early years. They develop a love of reading, although a few pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check. You are providing training for new staff in the teaching of phonics in order to address this. Pupils make steady progress in key stage 1. Their progress accelerates so that by the time they leave the school at the end of key stage 2, pupils achieve above-average standards in reading and mathematics. This is confirmed in the 2016 national curriculum tests.

Standards in writing are improving, particularly for the most able pupils. Many of the pupils achieved a high score in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling national curriculum tests in 2016. This is because of the emphasis you are now giving to developing these skills, as well as pupils' speaking skills. However, standards in writing are not yet as high as those in reading and mathematics for the disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because a few teachers are not identifying precisely the next steps in their learning and making sure that these are taught in lessons.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have established a culture of vigilance with regard to safeguarding pupils. You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. You have also ensured that all staff and governors have up-to-date knowledge and understanding of safeguarding requirements through regular training. The training has included, for example, safeguarding, safer recruitment and the prevention of radicalisation and extremism. You work very well with external agencies to take appropriate action to address any concerns. Issues are followed up robustly.

Pupils say they feel safe in school, and parents agree. Pupils learn how to stay safe, for example when using the internet. They are very mindful of keeping themselves and others safe on the school premises. They say that incidents of bullying are rare. They are confident that staff would deal promptly with any concerns they may have.

Inspection findings

- You, the head of teaching and learning and the staff are successful in providing an inspiring curriculum which engages all pupils in learning. Parents like the fact that the teachers are always willing to help out if they have any concerns about their children. The teachers know all the pupils very well.
- Parents of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are especially fulsome in their praise of the school's provision. You and the special educational needs coordinator ensure that teachers and teaching assistants are trained to meet the specific needs of each individual pupil who joins the school.
- You provide clear direction for the staff through the school improvement plan and draw on a range of appropriate external support to develop their skills. For example, you use other schools (including special schools) and the local authority's behaviour support and other services, to provide training for the staff. The impact is seen in pupils' improving academic progress and in their personal development.
- You are rightly developing the skills of the head of teaching and learning, and of subject leaders, in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. However, the new system for tracking the progress of pupil groups, including disadvantaged pupils, has not yet been finalised to support them in this work. Currently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment remains uneven.
- Staff in the early years make good use of observations and assessments of children's learning to inform lesson planning. As a result, children make good progress in all areas of learning. This is confirmed in the above-average proportion of children achieving a good level of development.
- Throughout the school, the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, exceed expectations of progress in reading and mathematics. They read fluently with good expression and understanding, drawing on a range of strategies, including phonics. They gain confidence in mathematics through working with partners to try out different methods in solving problems. By discussing the best methods, and because teachers ask them probing questions, they deepen their understanding. They are now making rapid progress in writing across subjects, especially in organising their work into paragraphs, varying their sentences and using more adventurous vocabulary.

- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in reading. They read fluently, drawing on a range of strategies, and talk enthusiastically about favourite books. They also make good progress in mathematics as the work builds systematically on their previous learning. Their writing skills are not developed as systematically in some areas of the school and so they make slower progress in writing. Recently, teachers are encouraging pupils to talk about their ideas for writing. This is beginning to increase their vocabulary and ability to express more complex thoughts.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in mathematics because the work is matched well to their needs. As their starting points are often much lower than those of other pupils, their attainment is not as high in the Year 1 phonics check. Through additional phonics work, their progress accelerates so that by the end of Year 2, they are able to apply their phonics knowledge in spelling unfamiliar words. However, some teachers and teaching assistants in key stage 1 are not extending these pupils' vocabulary and sentence structure systematically from their starting points to enable them to make good progress in their writing.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their lessons and the many clubs and enrichment activities. They enjoy working and playing together. They take pride in the presentation of their work, particularly in key stage 2.
- Pupils' behaviour is exceptionally good. They are very considerate towards other pupils and adults and show respect for their views. You can demonstrate how pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs make significant improvements in managing their own behaviour.
- Attendance for pupils, other than those who attend school on a flexible arrangement, is broadly average.
- Governors have an in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and area for improvement. They gain this through regular visits, examination of pupils' progress information and reports provided by you and an external partner. This enables them to hold you to account for the progress made by all pupils, including the disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium. Their impact is evident in the improvements you continue to make.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- ensure that pupils' progress is equally strong in all year groups by
 - sharing the very effective practice in key stage 2 to improve the new teachers' use of assessment, so that work is at the right level of challenge for each pupil, including in writing
 - improving the progress tracking system to provide robust information on all groups of pupils in each year

- ensure that teachers and teaching assistants improve the writing skills of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by extending their vocabulary and sentence structure systematically.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Frater
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The specific areas of focus for the inspection were:

- how well leaders and managers are improving attainment in writing to match the above-average attainment in reading and mathematics
- what leaders and managers are doing to improve progress at key stage 1, including in phonics, so that it is as strong as in the early years and key stage 2
- how well teachers are using assessment to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in line with other pupils
- how effectively leaders and managers are tackling the low attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the effectiveness of the school's procedures for safeguarding pupils and the quality of relationships between staff, pupils and parents.

The inspection activities to test out these aspects were:

- meetings with you, the head of teaching and learning, governors, middle leaders, and some parents as they brought their children to school
- examining pupils' progress information
- hearing pupils reading, especially the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- examining the work of these pupils in their books, including from last year
- observing the pupils working in lessons

- examining your school improvement plan and other documents, for example records relating to the safeguarding of pupils and their attendance
- analysing the 35 responses from parents to Ofsted's online Parent View survey.