

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



4 January 2017

Matthew Fletcher

Prestbury St Mary's Church of England Junior School
Bouncers Lane
Prestbury
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 5JB

Dear Matthew Fletcher

Short inspection of Prestbury St Mary's Church of England Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 29 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 June 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

Since your appointment in September 2015 as executive headteacher of both the junior and infant school in Prestbury St Mary's federation, you have worked relentlessly to plan and implement ways for pupils to be more successful. A characteristic of your leadership is your ability to engage with, and win the support of, staff. You have not chosen to restructure the leadership team in any way. Instead, you have provided opportunities for leaders to flourish and understand how accountability is valuable and necessary for school improvement. As a result of this, several developments have taken place that are appreciated by pupils, staff and the wider community.

Leaders are resolute in promoting a culture that focuses on the importance and enjoyment of education. This positive approach permeates the school. Pupils do not want to waste any learning time, preferring instead to involve themselves with all aspects of school life.

Pupils make good progress. Classrooms are vibrant and supportive places that stimulate pupils' thinking at greater depth. Pupils are articulate and discuss their learning willingly. They appreciate the developments that have been made, especially to help them with their writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

Governors and the leadership team have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are high-quality and detailed. Staff are trained well on how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism. Staff work sensitively with parents and external agencies to monitor and support the more vulnerable pupils.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have a perceptive and accurate awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have planned improvement activities accordingly. Pupils are making better progress throughout the school in the core subjects of English and mathematics.
- The most able pupils achieve the expected level of progress but too many of them are not achieving at the highest levels of which they are capable. School leaders are aware of this and are taking action to remedy this situation. There are emerging signs of improvement, particularly in mathematics. Teachers explore the application of mathematical skills with pupils more effectively. Pupils are solving problems and using mathematical reasoning more frequently, especially in Years 5 and 6.
- The use of additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is monitored well by governors and leaders. They evaluate the impact of actions carefully. As a result, these pupils attend school more regularly and are making better progress.
- The most able disadvantaged pupils are working as well as their peers. Any barriers to their learning, for example not having the right equipment, have been removed by the wise use of pupil premium funds.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. There has been detailed work in subjects, especially English and mathematics, to assess the skills needed as pupils move through the school. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is embedded and deepened well as they move from year to year and from topic to topic.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. This helps them to plan learning competently. Teachers ask questions which probe learning and deepen pupils' understanding effectively.
- The school is updating its policy on marking and feedback to reflect the systems that have changed for the better since the appointment of the executive headteacher. However, sometimes work is not evaluated well enough to help pupils extend their knowledge, understanding and skills further.
- Pupils of all ages read well and enjoy the opportunities they are given to do this. They are excited by challenging vocabulary and relish the chance to improve their writing by extending their choice of words.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. Among the many comments received, this one sums up the feelings of the majority: 'The school has a fantastic staff team who are incredibly well led by the headteacher and the senior leadership team. The job they do is tremendous.'
- The majority of pupils take pride in their work and want to do their best at all times.

- Pupils are happy at school and feel safe. Their responses to the online Ofsted pupil survey were overwhelmingly positive.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the pupils is a strength of the school. The Christian ethos pervades the school in a variety of ways, visually and physically as well as educationally and emotionally.
- Pupils are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain. Not enough is done to help them understand the fundamental British values of democracy and the rule of law.
- Governors are keen to support the school but need to provide a stronger and more strategic role with regards to the progress of the federation.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Teachers' feedback helps pupils to extend their knowledge, understanding and skills further on a regular basis
- the most able, including those who are disadvantaged, are provided with challenge to deepen their thinking, write at a greater depth and reason more proficiently in mathematics
- British values are embedded within the wider curriculum so that pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain through the promotion of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith
- governors build on their prior experiences and recognise the greater accountability necessary as leaders of a federation.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The key lines of enquiry were:

- What have leaders and governors done to improve the quality of teaching across the school, especially with regard to writing and mathematics?
- What are leaders doing to improve the outcomes for the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils?
- What have leaders done to improve the attendance of the most vulnerable pupils?

- What are leaders and governors doing to ensure that pupil premium funding and funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is helping to improve outcomes for pupils?
- How are leaders and governors ensuring that arrangements for safeguarding are secure and pervade the culture of the school?

During the inspection, I met with you, leaders, governors, staff and pupils. I spoke with an external adviser from the diocese on the telephone. I visited lessons to observe learning and looked at the quality of the work in pupils' exercise books. I considered documentary evidence related to the impact of the school's work, including safeguarding, attendance and the use of the pupil premium funding. I took into account 64 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and 64 comments written by parents plus responses to questionnaires completed by 22 pupils and 15 members of staff.