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Mrs Madeleine Gower
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Gower

Short inspection of Bredgar Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 31 January 2017, 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 February 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are developing a culture of very high expectations in all aspects and areas of the school. Working together with other leaders and governors, you have identified the right priorities for improvement and have effective actions and plans in place to achieve them.

You ensure that the Christian values and ethos of the school are maintained and embedded. These values permeate the school's personalised curriculum. Parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were overwhelmingly positive about the school and would recommend it to others. One parent commented: 'The ethos of the school is strong, children are encouraged and supported to grow, learn and develop across the spectrum of subjects.'

Since the previous inspection, the school has become part of a small collaboration of schools. You ensure that the school benefits from the opportunities that this collaboration offers, including training, development and the sharing of knowledge and understanding. These opportunities are helping you to continue to raise standards in the school. Outcomes at the end of the early years, in the Year 1 phonics screening check and at the end of key stage 1 are above those seen nationally.

You and your staff provide strong role models for pupils and for each other. Around the school and in classrooms, pupils display excellent learning and social behaviours. They care about each other and feel safe. Pupils are polite and friendly, and enjoy talking about their learning. They are very proud of their school and of the work that they do. You have developed an ethos and culture of nurturing pupils including the provision of a care suite for pupils with specific disabilities. As one parent commented: 'Bredgar School is second to none in its pastoral care. The staff provide a superb, nurturing environment.'

At the previous inspection, school leaders were asked to strengthen the links between subjects in the curriculum and to ensure that mathematical skills were applied in other subjects. Since then, school leaders and staff have worked closely together to develop the school's curriculum. This now offers a wide breadth and balance of experience for all pupils, linked together under themes. Within this, you ensure that there are planned opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum. Your work on developing the school's curriculum has been championed and used to guide other school leaders within the diocese.

School leaders carefully analyse assessment information and ensure that it reflects the higher expectations of the new curriculum. This analysis has identified some gaps in pupils' knowledge that are preventing pupils from achieving at a greater depth in their learning. You are supporting this work through a focus on developing pupils' learning skills across all subjects. These new approaches need to be further embedded to enable you to see the difference this makes to accelerating pupils' progress.

Your leadership team has carried out an intricate analysis of the results of mathematics tests and identified gaps in pupils' ability to reason. Developing this understanding is now a focus for all year groups and you have invested in staff training and new resources to support this work. However, you recognise that more needs to be done to ensure that all pupils are developing these skills effectively.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your colleagues work together effectively to monitor and support pupils' well-being. Strong relationships contribute to pupils' safety as staff know individual pupils very well and so notice any changes in behaviour. One parent commented: 'Bredgar school provides a nurturing and safe environment in which pupils flourish.'

Comprehensive training ensures that members of staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding, understand their responsibilities and are alert to pupils' needs. Staff are vigilant about the risks posed to children and know how to report any concerns they may have. Governors meet regularly with you to monitor safeguarding and you provide regular safeguarding reports to the governing body. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and are up to date. Your recent robust overhaul of safeguarding record-keeping ensures that records are now of a high quality and fit for purpose.

Pupils across the school have learned about what bullying is and know what to do if they ever feel worried or concerned about their own safety, or that of others. They report that bullying rarely happens and that they are confident that adults in the school deal effectively with these rare occurrences. Pupils feel valued because their teachers listen closely to what they have to say. You are working effectively with individual families to raise attendance. This is beginning to have an impact on reducing levels of persistent absence. You keep a high focus on attendance by celebrating and rewarding good and excellent levels regularly throughout the year.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I focused on the following aspects of the school: the effectiveness of the school's work to keep pupils safe; how well pupils achieve and make progress to a greater depth of understanding, particularly in mathematics and writing; how leaders are ensuring that outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, particularly the most able disadvantaged, are improving; how effectively leaders monitor the curriculum and how well pupils' apply their mathematical skills; and the effectiveness of governance.
- Pupils have many varied opportunities to write and enjoy the chance to self-assess their writing to make improvements. They also enjoy working together with their classmates to develop their writing skills. Teachers monitor pupils' application of grammar, punctuation and spelling skills across other areas of the curriculum. Findings show that pupils are beginning to consolidate these skills and deepen their understanding. You have accurately identified areas for development in writing to enable more pupils to work at a greater depth of understanding.
- Leaders analyse carefully how well pupils are achieving and progressing. You look carefully at the performance of individuals and groups. Your termly meetings with leaders and staff use this information effectively to inform planning and the level of support for individual pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in the school is well below the national average. This makes it difficult to compare the outcomes for this group of pupils with others over time. Some disadvantaged pupils also have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Together, we identified that current disadvantaged pupils, like their classmates, are confident learners. They have a positive attitude towards learning and are keen to participate in lessons. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils are making good progress. The pupil premium grant is used effectively to provide good-quality support to help disadvantaged pupils accelerate their progress. This includes the most able disadvantaged pupils, whose motivation to learn has been stimulated by joining in a multi-media project with other pupils about 'our lives'. The outcome from this work is on proud display in the entrance to the school.
- The leadership team is well supported and challenged by the governing body. Governors have a clear understanding of the needs of the school and have planned a strategic direction for future development. Governors understand their statutory duties and have regular meetings and visits to the school to ensure that these are carried out. They monitor attendance and challenge the school

leadership on the effectiveness of actions in place to reduce absenteeism.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- further develop pupils' learning skills so that more achieve a greater depth in their learning across all subjects
- further strengthen pupils' mathematical reasoning skills in all year groups across the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Marcia Goodwin
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the executive head and some subject leaders. I met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also talked with a local authority representative on the telephone. You and I visited all classes and I visited the after-school club. During these observations and also separately, I talked with pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books. I took account of 32 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 22 questionnaire responses from members of staff and 43 questionnaire responses from pupils. I reviewed the school's website and sampled a range of documents, including your summary of the school's effectiveness, the school's strategic development plan and documents relating to safeguarding. I also looked at information about pupils' learning and progress, and records relating to safeguarding and attendance.