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Miss Wendy Large
Headteacher
Christ Church (Church of England) Infant and Nursery School
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Dear Miss Large

Short inspection of Christ Church (Church of England) Infant and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 1 March 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 March 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 and the staff have created an exceptionally nurturing and caring school where all pupils are welcome. The 52 parents who contacted Ofsted during the inspection were universally positive about the school. One parent wrote: 'All my children have loved attending the school; they go in laughing and full of tales of the exciting things they have learned and done.'

Pupils enjoy school. One pupil remarked: 'I am really excited about walking to school because I get to see my friends and teachers.' Another pupil said she liked being at the school because 'We look after each other.'

In collaboration with the deputy headteacher, your strong leadership has had a direct impact on standards. You share responsibility for checking the quality of teaching and its impact on outcomes by visiting classes regularly and collecting information about pupils and their learning. You draw well on support from others, including the local authority, to moderate your judgements. This enables you to focus sharply on areas for improvement and is having a positive impact on the progress of current pupils. You have systems and processes for using this information to try to ensure that leaders and teachers have a clear direction for

improvement. However, these systems are not reflected upon regularly enough so that some of the recorded information you keep is out of date and therefore not relevant.

Pupils' attainment in the school at the end of key stage 1 dipped below the national average in 2016. Your planned actions have led to rapidly improving outcomes for current pupils. Evidence of pupils' progress in lessons and in books supports the accuracy of the school's current in-year information. This shows that the majority of pupils are currently on course to reach the national average this year. There are also improving outcomes at the end of Reception, where the proportion of children reaching a good level of development was close to all pupils nationally in 2016.

Effective leadership in early years is ensuring that children get a good start to their school life. Adults work well with individuals and groups, and learning is planned to ensure that children make good progress in all areas of their learning. A good example of this was seen during the inspection, when teaching assistants in Nursery and Reception were supporting the early development of writing. A range of strategies, including making meaningful marks on whiteboards, painting and the use of a range of writing instruments, are helping to develop fine motor skills.

You have established improved systems for subject leadership across the school, so that teams of teachers and governors take responsibility for subjects and areas of development in school. This is helping staff to develop their professional expertise and governors to have a good knowledge of how these changes are improving pupils' outcomes.

You have addressed the previous areas for improvement identified at your most recent inspection. Pupils across the school now make good progress in writing because they have good opportunities to engage in writing across the curriculum. Examples in Year 2 show the enthusiasm and motivation with which pupils tackled expanding nouns to describe a character from their class book.

The very small numbers of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by staff and they make good progress throughout the school.

Pupils enjoy the range of enrichment activities offered by the school, in particular the Monday lunchtime multi-sports club, which they enthusiastically referred to as their favourite playtime of the week.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils' well-being is central to the life of the school. The school's strong ethos and nurturing environment support the personal development of all pupils. Pupils spoke knowledgeably during the inspection about the ways that they can stay safe in a range of situations, including personally and online. Parents feel that you and the staff keep their children safe and well looked after. Pupils are very happy and eager to come to school.

You and your team ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are met. You deal with all concerns promptly and quickly follow up any referrals to external agencies. The strong culture of keeping pupils safe is underpinned by well-maintained systems in place in all areas of safeguarding, and staff understand these. Safeguarding arrangements are regularly reviewed to meet statutory requirements. Frequent and appropriate training for staff and governors is undertaken, including that related to the 'Prevent' duty.

Governors are regular visitors to the school and they ensure that all statutory checks on staff and other safeguarding arrangements continue to be robust. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection I focused in particular on the following aspects of the school: the gaps in progress and achievement of boys compared to girls, particularly in writing and mathematics; how well pupils achieve from their starting points in key stage 1 in writing and mathematics; the different rates of progress of pupils between the end of Reception and the end of key stage 1; the effectiveness of safeguarding within the school; and the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Differences between the performance of boys and girls are diminishing. This can be seen clearly in the books examined during the inspection. Boys are thriving on the extended writing opportunities they are given and are able to produce high-quality writing. From lower starting points, boys are currently making at least equal progress to girls and, in some cases, better progress.
- You have identified mathematics as an area for development across the school and have ensured, through performance management, that mathematics is a high priority for teachers. Your well-considered development plan has targeted how pupils are using and applying mathematics and, as a result, current pupils are achieving age-related expectations by the end of Year 2.
- The information you gather about pupils' progress is robust. You have a clear and simple system that is used effectively by leaders, teachers and governors. This information identifies which pupils and groups are making progress and which need some additional support or challenge. Pupils are given the opportunity to assess their own learning. This works well for checking if they found the work easy or require additional support. Teachers use this information well when planning their next lessons. Pupils within lessons were articulate in describing the steps they need to follow to improve their learning.
- In 2016, children who were lower attaining at the end of early years did not make as much progress as their peers nationally by the end of key stage 1. Current information for children in the school now shows that these pupils are making much better progress. Children who were middle attaining at the end of Reception are not achieving the greater-depth attainment level in the same numbers in reading, writing and mathematics as their national counterparts.

- During the past academic year, a very small proportion of disadvantaged pupils did not attend school regularly. It is clear from the evidence collected during inspection that you are not afraid to challenge parents who fail to send their children to school regularly and on time. Consequently, the attendance of this group has improved since last year.
- Rigorous tracking of pupils' writing ability by senior leaders shows that most pupils are currently making at least the progress expected of them. Visits to classrooms and scrutiny of pupils' books during the inspection confirm this picture to be accurate. Pupils write effectively for a range of purposes, as was evident in books and on displays throughout the school. Their writing is of equally high quality in all subjects.
- Most classrooms are well-organised and interesting places to learn. Nursery and Reception classes have exciting role-play areas, where children develop not only their personal, social, and emotional skills, but also their communication skills when they pretend to be 'fairies' or 'pirates'. The school uses displays well to support learning in classrooms. This is shown in the displays in corridors and classrooms that illustrate clearly the breadth and depth of the curriculum. Pupils' written work in particular is celebrated, leading to a language-rich environment.
- The school fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are polite, courteous and respectful of one another and adults. Collective worship tackles some difficult issues, for example the death of loved ones, sensitively and in a way that is accessible for all children. The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and in the playground. They are polite and respectful to adults and to visitors. They are sociable and enjoy working together on tasks.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the information the school keeps about itself is up to date and reflects the current picture of the school
- the progress of middle-prior-attaining children in reading, writing and mathematics is accelerated to ensure that they attain greater depth in line with similar pupils nationally.

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

Yours sincerely

Max Vlahakis
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher and two governors, including the chair, and your local authority adviser. I spoke informally to pupils in the playground and in lessons and to parents as they brought their children in to school. I looked at the 52 responses to the Parent View survey and the survey of 20 staff views. We visited lessons together. I looked at the work in a selection of pupils' books. I considered the school's self-evaluation and its plans for development. I took into account pupils' standards of attainment and rates of progress. I read a range of school policies, including those for safeguarding and child protection. The inspection focused particularly on gaps in progress and achievement of boys compared to girls, particularly in writing and mathematics, how well pupils achieve from their starting points in key stage 1 in writing and mathematics, the progress of pupils attaining the levels described as emerging and exceeding in Reception to the end of key stage 1, the effectiveness of safeguarding within the school and the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.