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Ms Jo Devine
Headteacher
St Andrew's CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School, Totteridge
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Dear Ms Devine

Short inspection of St Andrew's CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School, Totteridge

Following my visit to the school on 28 February 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 October 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 and the school leadership, including governors, know the school well and have a clear understanding of what needs to be improved. You have invested in a programme of professional development for teachers, particularly those in the early stages of their career. You are clear in your expectations for strong classroom practice, and have successfully tackled historically weak teaching. As a result, teaching has improved and staff morale is high.

One of the strengths of the school is the behaviour of the pupils. They demonstrate the Christian ethos and values of respect and courage that underpin the work of the school. Older pupils are positive role models for the younger children. They play well together in a very limited space. Consequently, incidents of negative behaviour are rare. Pupils say 'bullying doesn't happen here'. They are rightly proud to attend St Andrew's School.

The areas for development identified at the previous inspection have been mainly addressed. Teachers target questions that challenge pupils to do their best, because they use assessment information accurately. Pupils' progress by the end of Year 6 in 2016 was strong, especially in reading and mathematics. This was the case for the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and the most able disadvantaged. Leaders rightly identify that outcomes have been less successful in writing for the most able pupils, particularly in key stage 1. Leaders are already taking effective action to

raise standards in writing so that they are similar to those in reading and mathematics. Teachers' timely guidance to accelerate pupils' progress in writing has had a positive impact. Work seen in lessons and in books shows that pupils are developing their writing skills well. The school's own assessment information suggests that writing remains less strong than reading and mathematics, but it is improving. As a result, the differences between the subjects are diminishing, particularly in key stage 1.

You have an outward-looking vision for the school, and leaders have developed effective links with other schools. This partnership work enables leaders to benchmark pupils' achievements and build teacher confidence in knowing how to challenge pupils' learning even further.

The middle leaders are relatively new to their roles. They are enthusiastic and passionate about their subjects and can talk about the impact they have had already on improving pupils' progress, particularly in writing across the curriculum. They understand school performance information and use this to identify appropriate actions to support staff. Senior leaders give middle leaders the right support to continue to develop their roles and further increase their impact on raising pupils' standards.

Safeguarding is effective.

The safety of pupils and staff is paramount. Due to the unusual placing of the school's perimeter fencing, leaders, including governors, are extra vigilant in ensuring that the security of the school is effective. The system of supervising the play space means that security in and around the school is robust. Records show governors are relentless in trying to resolve the current situation. Parents are confident that their children are safe in school.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders' procedures for vetting staff are robust. Training to meet recent government guidelines are up to date. This includes ensuring that staff understand about female genital mutilation and can identify signs that pupils may be at risk of radicalisation. Staff understand the procedure for raising concerns, and leaders are tenacious in chasing responses from outside agencies if information exchange is too slow.

Pupils talk confidently about how to assess risks when they are online and have regular updates in lessons. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of the wider implications of sharing personal information. The strong relationships between staff and pupils means that pupils adhere to the safeguarding procedures regarding the security of the building. They appreciate the adult supervision at playtimes and know they can go to staff if they have concerns.

Inspection findings

- My first key line of enquiry focused on the safeguarding procedures in school. The perimeter fence issue is a unique situation that the school has to consider daily. I looked at how leaders' actions are ensuring pupil safety.
- You and the governors have robust processes around the school so that there is tight security in and around the school. All staff are keenly aware of the need to be visible on the playground. Work by all staff ensures that pupils are able to assess risks associated with their own safety while using the playground. Consequently, there has been no breach of security and you have the confidence of the parents to keep their children safe.
- I looked at the actions taken by leaders to improve the progress of the most able pupils in writing, particularly in key stage 1. The results in 2016 showed that not as many pupils achieved the higher standards as national averages.
- Leaders have quickly put plans in place to ensure that the current Year 2 most-able pupils are making accelerated progress to exceed the expected standards. The support for these pupils is making a difference. Books seen, show that pupils are effectively developing their writing skills across a range of curriculum subjects.
- There are now greater challenges for the most able children in the early years to develop their early writing skills. The children use their knowledge to sound out letters successfully. They demonstrate good writing skills and neat letter formation.
- A further key line of enquiry looked at governors' understanding of the measures the school puts in place to address the high level of persistent absence of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Governors have a clear overview of the work the school does to improve pupils' attendance. They understand the issues raised by the leaders' system of attendance analysis. For example, housing issues mean some of the more vulnerable pupils travel long distances to attend school. The school's learning mentor supports parents to improve attendance. Where this has been successful, the pupils' attendance has risen. Currently, overall attendance is 97%, which is above the national average.
- Finally, in agreement with senior leaders, I looked at the impact of the new middle leadership team on raising pupil standards.
- The group of subject leaders are developing their skills to support you and the deputy headteacher to improve pupils' progress in writing. They understand how to use assessment information to identify their next steps and successfully support other staff to continue the drive to raise standards. You agree that they are in the early stages of their leadership career and require further support and development.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all teachers have consistently high expectations of the most able pupils so they can make the progress in writing needed to exceed the expected standards by the end of key stage 1
- new leaders develop their roles fully so they can further improve the quality of teaching, enabling a higher proportion of pupils to make rapid progress and attain the higher standards in writing across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Sara Morgan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I carried out the following activities:

- met with you, the deputy headteacher and middle leaders
- held a meeting with six members of the governing body
- spoke with a small group of parents at the beginning of the school day
- met with a group of pupils from Years 1 to 6 to seek their views of the school
- reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, information about pupils' progress, pupils' attendance and reviewed minutes of governing body meetings. The school's single central record of pre-employment checks and safeguarding procedures were also reviewed
- the school's website was scrutinised and confirmed that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information
- considered 65 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 25 responses to the staff survey
- visited lessons in all classes with you and the deputy headteacher.