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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Alun Richards
Headteacher
Bemerton St John Church of England Aided Primary School
Lower Road
Bemerton
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP2 9NW

Dear Mr Richards

Short inspection of Bemerton St John Church of England Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 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.

You have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You have developed effective systems and processes that ensure pupils make good progress. You have carefully deployed additional adults to support individual pupils and small groups of pupils. Staff provide support that is closely matched to pupils' needs and they are having a positive impact on the learning of pupils.

You have provided effective training, coaching and professional support for staff, helping several to develop as leaders. You have introduced tracking systems which pinpoint areas for development. For example, the introduction of guided reading activities focusing on developing pupils' reading comprehension has led to rapid progress for pupils at key stage 2. Your success in this area has resulted in staff leading on this development across a number of schools that you work with. However, while middle leaders have developed improvements in pupils' outcomes in science, reading and religious education, not all have had similar impact.

The school is a place where the child is at the heart of every decision made. Lively and attractive displays of pupils' high-quality work in corridors and classrooms helps the school environment to be a vibrant and welcoming one. You have also developed curriculum provision, and have worked closely with the diocese and the local authority to secure funding to redevelop the village church, creating a space for the school to use for drama, assemblies and indoor sporting activities.

Pupils told me about their enjoyment of school. They were enthusiastic about the opportunities presented to them in the form of enrichment activities, including drama productions and sporting fixtures.

The behaviour of children around the school is a delight. They are open and honest in their discussions with one another about their learning and keen to share their experiences with visitors. You and your staff have fostered this by encouraging pupils to access every opportunity, giving them the chance to do the things that interest them and challenging them to try new things. One child said, 'What I love about this school is the support we receive from our teachers and the caring nature of the school.'

You have ensured that parents are fully engaged in their children's life at school. Your work with a local university has contributed to the feeling of support expressed by parents. As one parent stated: 'The school really cares for my children and I feel supported by all the teachers and the head, who does a fantastic job for the community.'

Safeguarding is effective.

The systems in place to ensure the safe recruitment of staff and to carry out necessary checks on adults in the school are rigorous and thorough. Record-keeping is comprehensive and well organised. Staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities and receive regular training and support. As designated safeguarding lead, you are tenacious in ensuring that concerns are followed up and that external agencies provide appropriate support to promote pupils' well-being.

Pupils say they feel safe and supported at the school. Pupils are well prepared to face a wide range of situations they may encounter in the future, including those on social media. Pupils support one another well if they have a concern or worry and are well supported by staff. Risk assessments are thorough. Responses by staff and parents to Ofsted's questionnaires state that children are safe and well cared for in school.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry focused on the attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 2. In 2016 the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. You have put in place tracking systems which closely monitor the attainment of pupils across reading, writing and mathematics. This has allowed you to organise targeted support for those pupils who are not on track so that they catch up quickly. Consequently, Year 6 pupils are improving the standards of work they achieve in reading, writing and mathematics this year.
- You have provided effective training and support for staff to ensure that pupils improve their understanding of mathematics. Teachers now regularly provide more challenging problem-solving activities. However, you recognise the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their developing mathematical skills and understanding across other curriculum subjects.
- My second line of enquiry was about the pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics in the early years and key stage 1. You and your early years leader, along with other teachers, recognised the need for greater support for pupils in their learning. You have worked hard to engage parents in their children's learning and to improve the transition process for families. You provided a series of after-school sessions for parents on literacy and mathematic skills. While initially attendance was not as high as it might have been, this has improved to 100% attendance. Your work with a local university on parental engagement is a strength and is helping to reach parents so that they are equipped to better support their children in their learning. Additionally, you have introduced effective systems to ensure progress is monitored and misconceptions are identified and addressed. The impact of this is that pupils in Year 1 who did not meet expected standards at the end of the early years have made rapid progress. Pupils currently in Reception are also making rapid progress.
- My next line of enquiry centred on the curriculum provision for science. You have worked with external partners to develop science resources in the school and to develop the capacity of your teachers to deliver science lessons. You have built strong links with the local secondary schools and have used them to give pupils access to more specialist equipment and teaching. Pupils are making better progress than at this time last year as a consequence of this increased focus. This can be seen in pupils' better understanding of scientific concepts, such as magnetism.
- Another line of enquiry for the inspection related to the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs. You work closely with other agencies to follow up issues and liaise effectively with parents. Attendance figures for this year are well above levels of attendance in previous years.
- My next line of enquiry explored the progress that disadvantaged pupils make compared to others in the school. Governors have worked with the senior leaders to develop provision for these pupils. You have introduced closer monitoring of the performance of these pupils, redeployed staff to support those who are

struggling with misconceptions and set up breakfast and after-school clubs. Parents of this group of pupils have fully engaged with staff so they are well placed to help their children. You also have instigated individual learning profiles for all disadvantaged pupils, with targeted planning for specific pupils in lessons. As a result, pupils in receipt of pupil premium are making rapid progress.

- My final line of enquiry centred on the leadership of the school at all levels. You have strengthened middle leadership, for example in the leadership of religious education, as recognised by the school's status as a gold school by the diocese. The work carried out by leaders has also seen pupils make better progress in reading. Middle leaders in some subjects are not improving pupils' progress as quickly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they fully develop the capacity of middle leaders in the school in order to ensure that they have a greater impact on the progress pupils make across all year groups
- teachers plan learning that provides more opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Shanks
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, you joined me to observe learning in classrooms. We looked at a large number of pupils' books and learning journals covering a wide range of subjects.

Meetings were held with you and with middle leaders, an officer of the local authority and six governors. I scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including

the school's own self-evaluation and development plan, protection records, and the school's assessment information.

I spoke with pupils in classes as well as at breaktimes to talk about their experience of school. I also took into account the views of 27 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and those of nine staff who responded to the staff questionnaire. I also spoke with parents at the start of the school day and read letters from parents.