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Miss Emma Baker
Acting headteacher
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Dear Miss Baker

Short inspection of Kilmersdon Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

Despite significant changes to staff including to senior leaders, the leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Following the sad loss of the previous headteacher, you, as deputy headteacher, have stepped into the role of acting headteacher. While governors have been securing the recruitment of a new headteacher, you have provided calm and reassuring leadership that has ensured that the school has not declined. You have maintained the vision of 'believe, belong, succeed'.

Pupils continue to behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning. These were both strengths identified at the previous inspection. Pupils say that staff believe in them; 'teachers want us to do well and they give us top tips so we can', was a typical comment. Nearly all parents and carers who expressed a view would recommend the school and all say that their child is happy and safe. Pupils are proud of their school, saying 'people care for you here'.

Outcomes information for 2016 shows that standards are good. Pupils achieve better than the national averages across the school. Despite several changes to the teaching staff this year, you have worked hard to keep a focus on the quality of teaching and learning, thereby ensuring that pupils continue to succeed.

You have created a leadership team that is determined to do the best for pupils, and leaders have worked relentlessly to build on the strengths identified at the

previous inspection. For example, you have made changes to ensure that work set is at the right level for pupils in different year groups.

Leaders are knowledgeable about their subject areas and are highly ambitious to see further improvements to teaching and learning. More should be done, however, to ensure that these leaders are more effective in checking the impact that improvements have on pupils' learning. This area was identified at the previous inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead and works closely with staff, governors and a range of agencies to ensure that pupils are safe. Pupils say that they do feel safe in school. There is a wide range of information for pupils throughout the year about how to keep themselves safe, including how to keep safe online.

The office team ensure that pre-employment checks on staff are carefully completed and recorded. The governor who has a link to safeguarding monitors the schools' practice. Staff receive a wide range of safeguarding training and updates and are therefore well informed and confident to notice any concerns regarding the welfare or safety of a child. They know what to do to report any concerns.

Inspection findings

- We agreed together some key lines of enquiry to explore. Our first line of enquiry involved looking at the actions leaders have taken to ensure that the quality of teaching remains consistently good. Several new staff have joined the school recently and leaders have used this as an opportunity to ensure that all staff have sound knowledge of how to teach basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics according to the needs of pupils.
- Leaders have provided staff with clear guidance and there is a consistent approach towards teaching and learning in classes. While expectations are high across the school, the most able pupils could achieve more. Sometimes these pupils are not asked questions that are challenging or given additional work in order to ensure that they deepen their thinking and extend their understanding.
- Subject leaders have good knowledge about their subjects and provide strong support for staff. Teachers share their good practice with each other so that everyone moves forward together. For example, the leader for phonics frequently observes phonics learning across the classes and provides useful feedback to staff so that pupils achieve well. The outcomes for phonics are a strength of the school, being well above national averages.
- Leaders have developed the quality of the teaching of reading. Younger pupils receive skilled teaching provided by teachers and teaching assistants. This develops their reading skills well.

- Teaching assistants have received strong professional development, which helps them to provide high-quality support for the teaching of phonics and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This contributes to the highly inclusive nature of the school. In classes, however, the skills of teaching assistants are sometimes under-used. Some could contribute more to the learning for pupils during these sessions.
- Our second line of enquiry focused on the actions that leaders have taken to improve attendance. Overall, attendance for the past two years has been better than the national average. Leaders have worked hard to support the small number of families who need additional help to ensure that their children attend well. Outside agencies are used when needed and leaders do all they can to communicate effectively with parents to ensure that pupils continue to thrive.
- Our third line of enquiry looked at how leaders check that improvements to teaching and learning are consistently in place and that they are having an impact on the progress that pupils make.
- Leaders understand the key strengths and next priorities for improvement for the school as they carefully evaluate how well pupils are achieving throughout the year. This enables leaders to ensure that staff receive the guidance they need so that any weaknesses in teaching and learning are improved. However, there is not a robust system in place for ensuring that the improvements made are implemented effectively across the school.
- The school development plan describes the actions needed to improve provision but it does not describe who will check that improvements have been made, how and when such checks will be made, and whether they are making a difference to how well pupils achieve. Leaders are aware that a more rigorous approach is needed to check that the improvements are effective in improving outcomes for pupils. Leaders, supported by governors, have already started work on this.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders, including subject leaders, check that improvements to the quality of teaching have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes across the school
- the quality of teaching across the school continues to improve, by ensuring that the most able pupils receive appropriate challenge
- teaching assistants' skills are used effectively to support pupils' learning during lessons.

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

Yours sincerely

Tonwen Empson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and subject leaders and visited all classes with either you or other leaders in order to gather evidence on aspects of teaching, learning and assessment. I talked to teachers, the special educational needs coordinator and support staff. I met with members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of governors. I spoke to a representative from the local authority. I scrutinised a range of documentation and the school's website, including the school's self-evaluation of its own performance, the school development plan, information on the progress of pupils and a range of documents related to safeguarding. I spoke to pupils during the day and observed lunchtime. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and considered the 29 responses to the online survey, Parent View.