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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Rachel Miller
Headteacher
Kingskerswell Church of England Primary School
Coffinswell Lane
Kingskerswell
Newton Abbot
Devon
TQ12 5HN

Dear Mrs Miller

Short inspection of Kingskerswell Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As pupil numbers increase, you, your governors and the leadership team are focused tirelessly on securing the ongoing success of Kingskerswell Church of England Primary School. By strengthening the leadership team you have been able to introduce school-wide practices to ensure that pupils achieve well. Your governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and work closely with you and the leadership team to tackle weaknesses promptly.

You have high aspirations for staff and pupils and communicate them clearly. You and your leadership team make regular checks on what is going well and what needs to be improved further. The actions planned as a result of these checks are precise and you are very clear about the improvement they are expected to achieve. The question asked before every decision made is 'what difference will it make to pupils?' This approach ensures that teaching continues to improve and pupils' personal and academic development is supported well.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement raised at the last inspection. Pupils respond positively to the feedback, support and guidance they receive. They are helped to develop the skills needed to set their own targets for improvement. Pupils show good levels of resilience and are not over-reliant on adults even when faced with challenging tasks. Training for teachers and teaching

assistants, and close working with other local schools, has helped to ensure that teaching and pupils' progress has improved.

Pupils enjoy being at school and behave well. They work hard in lessons and provide each other with good levels of support. Summing up the views expressed by a number of pupils, one commented that 'pupils have smiles on their faces because teachers make lessons fun'. Pupils expressed their confidence that new pupils to the school are supported well to settle quickly, and that they soon develop good friendships. There is some variance in the views expressed by parents but most are happy with the school and would recommend it to other parents. The vast majority consider that their children are happy, safe and well looked after at school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You make certain that regular training keeps staff up to date with the most recent legislation. You regularly reinforce the school's position that 'if you walk past it you accept it, and that is unacceptable'. As a consequence staff are vigilant and understand what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. You are extremely proactive in pursuing concerns about pupils with other professionals. You ensure that referrals for specialist or early support are managed well and that records are detailed and of high quality.

Pupils report that they feel safe at school and would be happy to talk to an adult if they have a worry or concern. Pupils spoken to during the inspection were particularly appreciative of the support they get from adults when they have personal or emotional issues. A number of parents also expressed their appreciation for the support they have received when faced with challenging family circumstances. You are resolute in your promotion of good levels of attendance and checks to ensure pupils are safe if they are not at school. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about how to keep themselves safe at home, when out with their friends and in school. They are well prepared to face risks in society, including when using the internet and social media.

Inspection findings

- Children's performance in the early years has improved since the last inspection and we agreed to explore the reasons for this. Links with local pre-schools have been strengthened. Some shared training has focused on helping children to have a better understanding of phonics before starting school. This has contributed well to the progress children make in developing early reading and writing skills. School staff work closely with parents to ensure that they too are able to support their children's understanding of phonics at home. Adult-led sessions in school ensure that children's phonic knowledge and understanding continue to develop well. Children read simple texts confidently and use their phonic knowledge to write words for themselves.
- You have ensured that early years staff have received good-quality training and are able to plan an imaginative range of activities that meet children's needs in

all areas of learning. Staff involvement in play activities enhances children's learning very well. For example, through careful questioning a group of boys were helped to think of ways to increase the distance toy cars would travel down a ramp towards a brick tower they had constructed. The indoor and outdoor areas are used very well to provide a wide range of activities that capture children's imagination, so their interest and engagement is sustained and their learning moves on at a good rate. Children's learning is regularly and accurately assessed. This information is used well to modify the provision so it continues to support children's good, and at times rapid, progress.

- We next agreed to check on the progress made by pupils in key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. In particular we focused on how well disadvantaged pupils and those who had previously attained the expected standard in the early years are progressing. Improved teaching in the early years is ensuring that more pupils start key stage 1 with the knowledge and skills needed to continue to make good progress. You have ensured that the effective teaching of phonics continues through key stage 1 and that pupils are encouraged to read for a variety of purposes. These strategies are making a significant difference to the progress pupils make and the standard they attain in reading. Compared to 2016 more pupils in Year 2, including those from the groups we focused on, are on track to reach the expected or greater depth standard this year.
- Although not as marked as for reading, the progress being made by pupils in writing and mathematics has also improved. You have ensured that teachers and teaching assistants have accessed good-quality training so they can assess pupils accurately. They make good use of this information to plan activities in lessons that are well matched to pupils' needs and move their learning on quickly. The emphasis on developing pupils' phonic knowledge has helped them to be more confident writers. Similarly, the importance of being able to calculate accurately and read and understand mathematical problems has lifted pupils' standards in mathematics. The difference seen in previous years between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils is reducing, and more pupils are making good progress from their previously expected standard. Although you recognise there is more to do, most pupils this year are on track to reach at least the expected standard in writing and mathematics, and more are on track to reach the greater depth standard than in previous years.
- The third area we considered was the progress being made through key stage 2 in writing and mathematics. In particular we looked at the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those whose attainment fell within the middle prior attainment band at the end of key stage 1. Improving the teaching of grammar and widening opportunities for pupils to write at length and in other subjects has successfully lifted both pupils' progress and the standard they attain. Pupils are encouraged to review their work and the work of their peers to identify strong features and to make suggestions as to how it might be improved. This reflection ensures that pupils are not complacent but are challenging themselves to produce increasingly high-quality pieces of work. As for key stage 1, the effective use of assessment information when planning lessons in mathematics is key to the improved progress pupils are making. Teaching is frequently modified to

ensure that any gaps in pupils' knowledge or understanding are tackled quickly. This helps pupils to sustain a 'can do' attitude and rise to the challenges they are set. They work hard to complete the most challenging of tasks. You and your leadership team know there is more to do to lift standards further. However, across key stage 2, pupils' work, and the information you have relating to their progress clearly shows there has been a marked improvement this year. This improved performance extends to disadvantaged pupils and those whose attainment fell within the middle prior attainment band by the end of key stage 1, with more on track to attain the expected or higher standard in both writing and mathematics by Year 6 than in 2016.

- Finally, we looked at how the school tackles poor pupil attendance. The attendance of the vast majority of pupils is good and is celebrated. However, the attendance of some pupils receiving support for special educational needs and/or disabilities and some disadvantaged pupils has been much lower than for other pupils over the last three years. The school is uncompromising in its procedures to tackle persistent absenteeism and works closely with the education welfare officer. There has been a notable improvement in the attendance of some pupils this year as a result of actions taken and the support provided. However, the attendance of a few pupils remains a significant concern.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- assessment information continues to be used to guide and modify planning so pupils make at least good progress and more reach the highest standards in writing and mathematics
- a robust approach to improving pupil attendance is sustained so even more pupils are afforded the best opportunity to achieve well.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Cogher
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the leadership team. Two members of the governing body, including one of the co-chairs, met with me to discuss the progress made by the school since the last inspection and the vision for the school's future. I had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local

authority. I considered a number of school documents including your self-evaluation, the school improvement plan and the writing and mathematics action plans. I looked at a range of documents and records relating to safeguarding, including the school's vetting and recruitment procedures. I spoke to parents as they dropped their children off at school and gathered their views further through the school's recently conducted parent questionnaire, and Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Responses to the staff and pupil questionnaire were also considered. I spoke to pupils during lessons, at playtime and lunchtime, and had a longer discussion with a group of Year 5 pupils. You and members of the leadership team observed lessons with me in the early years and Years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. We also looked at samples of pupils' written and mathematics work and information about their progress.