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Mrs Carolyn Taylor
Headteacher
Kelsale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
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Dear Mrs Taylor

Short inspection of Kelsale Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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 June 2013.

This school continues to be good

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have established a strong sense of teamwork among staff so that all are working towards the same, common goals. In addition, you provide good support to your new leadership team so that leaders work effectively to help you make the school even better. Pupils' personal development and behaviour were major strengths at the time of the previous inspection. They continue to be strong. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is impeccable. Pupils enjoy learning and are highly focused in lessons. Those I spoke to were very enthusiastic about their school and told me how much they enjoyed their work, particularly reading and mathematics. The significant minority of pupils who join the school midway through their primary education settle in rapidly. This is because you and your staff have created a warm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere within which pupils feel they belong. Pupils thrive as learners, developing into individuals who are confident and self-assured, and who understand their own strengths and weaknesses. Pupils get on well with one another regardless of background. This is particularly evident when they work together in lessons to exchange and clarify ideas about their work. Your high expectations of staff and pupils encourage all to give of their best.

Pupils from all backgrounds continue to make good progress because they are taught well and are given extra support when they need it. You rightly identified the

need to overhaul the way reading was taught across the whole school following a disappointing set of results in the phonics screening check and reading tests in 2016. The swift actions you and senior leaders took have resulted in improvements in teaching. Consequently, pupils are making good progress and achieving well across the school in both phonics and reading. In addressing the root causes of the disappointing results of last year, you have made good use of support from the local authority. This has helped you to embed a more rigorous approach to teaching reading.

Children in the early years get a good start to their education. During the Reception Year, children are provided with a good range of well-structured activities to help them prepare well for learning in Year 1. Adults question and support children effectively so that they develop their skills well, including in early reading, writing and mathematics. However, we agreed that adults are not building enough writing activities into other areas of the curriculum to help enrich and extend children's writing even further.

Parents, including those who have children in the early years, are full of praise for the school, the staff and for the education it provides for their children. Staff and pupils are, rightly, proud of their school and hold you in high esteem. You have ensured that the school has developed further since its previous inspection. Working with your staff, you have addressed the issues identified in the previous report so that teachers now make consistently good use of teaching assistants and provide pupils with clear explanations of what they expect them to do. Pupils said how approachable they find their teachers and that staff help them to understand their work, especially when it is difficult. Visits to lessons and work in pupils' books show that teachers give pupils enough time to complete their work, which was an issue at the time of the previous inspection.

Safeguarding is effective

Systems in place meet the statutory requirements for effective safeguarding procedures and practices. Pupils' well-being and safety are of paramount importance. Staff are vigilant and well trained. Hence, they know what to do and who to go to should they have any concerns about a pupil's welfare or safety. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Pupils say that they are safe at school, and parents responding to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, all agree that their children are safe and well looked after. Staff know pupils at an individual level extremely well, especially key staff such as the special educational needs coordinator, and pick up very quickly if something is not right. You and your staff work closely to support parents and families as well as individual pupils who are in need of help.

Inspection findings

- I followed a number of lines of enquiry, one of which was focused on reading.

Outcomes in reading at the end of key stages 1 and 2 and in phonics at the end of Year 1 were below national averages in 2016. In particular, middle-ability pupils did not do very well in reading at the end of key stage 2, and neither did low-ability pupils at the end of key stage 1. During our initial discussion, you were able to tell me about the new and more rigorous approaches you have put in place to improve reading.

- When we visited classrooms and looked at books, we were able to see the good progress that pupils, including middle- and low-ability pupils, now make in reading and phonics. This is because they have daily reading lessons which are well organised and provide time for pupils to practise skills such as scanning, selecting and analysing character and plot or information. Pupils are also challenged to think more deeply about their reading.
- Pupils of all abilities read accurately and fluently. Younger pupils are developing a good knowledge of phonics and use this to help them read new or unfamiliar words. Pupils understand the content of the books and the texts they read. Those in key stage 2 are becoming skilled in critically analysing texts and are developing deeper understanding of them.
- My second line of enquiry was about how well leaders use the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Results of tests in 2016 showed a continuing gap in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others in reading and writing. In addition, disadvantaged pupils, as a group, had high levels of absence in the last academic year. The pupil premium strategy report published on the school's website did not include clear identification of the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils, or adequate analysis of the effectiveness of its use over the last year.
- The inspection evidence indicates that the funding is generally well used. The strategies implemented are having a noticeable impact this year on improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils who have previously high absence rates. Some of the funding is spent on teaching assistants and they are well deployed in lessons to work with disadvantaged pupils who are falling behind. Disadvantaged pupils who join the school part-way through their primary education are supported effectively to catch up. Strategies include carefully planned one-to-one sessions, which are particularly helpful in promoting pupils' reading. From their different starting points, disadvantaged pupils are currently making good progress in their reading and writing but some gaps between their attainment and the attainment of others persist.
- While the way you are using pupil premium funding is having a positive effect, we agreed that the analysis of the use of funding was not effective in helping you, or your governors, understand which spending is having the most impact on raising achievement.
- My final line of enquiry was about the quality of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Outcomes in 2016 indicate that some pupils receiving support did not make enough progress or achieve as well as others with the same starting points. You agreed that this would be a useful focus for the inspection and that much work is being done to improve the

provision for this group of pupils.

- The special educational needs coordinator, who took up post at the start of this academic year, makes sure that pupils have sharply focused short-term targets for learning and that they make progress against these. Work in books, visits to lessons and discussions with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities show that these pupils are making good progress across the school. You and your special educational needs coordinator go out of your way to provide the help these pupils need to enable them to take key steps in their learning.
- In common with disadvantaged pupils, a significant number of those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities arrive at the school part-way through their primary education. For those pupils with significant needs who join the school towards the latter end of key stage 2, the school has less time to identify their needs and, where necessary, to complete the process of applying for an education, health and care plan. The school does a good job nonetheless to identify needs accurately and to provide appropriate support.
- While it is clear that pupils are well supported, the special educational needs coordinator has not yet implemented the analysis necessary to ensure that the success of different strategies and interventions implemented to support pupils is well enough understood.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- children in the early years have a rich range of opportunities to use their emerging writing skills for different purposes
- the use of the pupil premium funding is analysed to identify what works best
- an effective system is in place to analyse how well the different strategies implemented to support pupils who have special educational needs help them to make good progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Gulshanbir Kayembe
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you to discuss the progress made since the previous inspection and the key lines of enquiry. I held meetings with the special educational needs coordinator and a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. In addition, I spoke to a group of pupils from key stage 2 and listened to them, and a group of key stage 1 pupils, read. As part of the inspection, I looked at a variety of documents and records, including your self-evaluation summary, the school improvement plan and assessment information. I also scrutinised the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures, the records of checks leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children, and information relating to attendance and behaviour. We undertook observations together of learning across the school, viewed work in pupils' books, and talked to pupils about their learning. During break and lunchtime, I observed pupils around the school and held conversations with them about the school and their work. I also examined the survey results from 19 members of staff and 22 pupils. Finally, I spoke to a number of parents as they dropped their children off at school and took into account the responses of 86 parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. This included free text comments that many had made.