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Ms Barbara Wightwick
Headteacher
St Johns Walham Green Church of England Primary School
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Dear Ms Wightwick

Short inspection of St Johns Walham Green Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 June 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 December 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Governors, like leaders, have a good understanding of the school. They work proactively with leaders to find solutions to address areas for development. For example, they ask probing questions on the rates of attendance for key groups of pupils.

Since the previous inspection, you have successfully empowered an enthusiastic team of senior and middle leaders who have been key to driving improvements. This was an area for development in the last inspection, which you have tackled effectively. Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the areas of strength in the school and those that need attention. You and your leaders are committed to addressing these areas. Parents and carers comment positively about the improvements made by leaders. For example, one parent commented on how the school was now using 'deeper learning techniques' to aid her child to achieve well at the end of Year 6.

You found the change to a new curriculum a challenge for the school, particularly in writing. By developing a robust tracking system, leaders are now able to check the progress of each pupil. Leaders have ensured that targets for individual pupils match their abilities more closely than before. As a result, teachers typically set work that is at the correct level for pupils. Pupils told me that work is now more challenging and that teachers help them to achieve well.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality. You and governors have ensured that policies and procedures protect pupils from harm and identify potential risks. Record-keeping is detailed and meticulous. Advice from external agencies allows leaders to respond appropriately to any concerns. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum acts as a key tool to develop pupils' safety. Age-appropriate themes within personal, social and health education give pupils opportunities to explore safety at a deeper level. Leaders and governors have particularly focused on ensuring that they work proactively with pupils and parents on embedding e-safety. Leaders and governors fulfil the 'Prevent' duty effectively. They receive up-to-date training and readily share this information with staff.

The pupils I spoke to during the inspection told me that they feel safe. Pupils have a clear understanding of whom to go to should they have concerns. Safe and secure working environments, together with respectful dialogue in class, allow pupils to express themselves confidently. For example, a key stage 2 pupil told me, 'The school allows me to express my own faith and respects my views. This makes me feel safe.' Parents value the work the school undertakes to help pupils keep safe. One parent praised the 'ruler' scheme for allowing pupils to 'discuss their feelings'. This comment was typical of parents' positive views of the school's work to promote pupils' well-being.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, leaders and I agreed on three key lines of enquiry. The first of these was around high absence and persistent absence rates for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders have made a number of changes to the way they track attendance. The attendance leader strategically oversees the impact of strategies and identifies pupils' trends in attendance on a regular basis. As a result, the attendance rates of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have significantly risen so that they are now in line with other pupils nationally. Rates of persistent absence for these pupils have also fallen. Although attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils have improved overall, the persistent absence rates for these pupils are still above national averages.
- My second key line of enquiry was around the improvements the school was making to raise pupils' attainment and progress in writing across the school. I visited a number of writing lessons and scrutinised books alongside leaders.
- I found consistent approaches to the teaching of writing. Pupils are encouraged to edit their work and write extended pieces independently. Leaders have addressed the previous challenges around the new curriculum in writing and made significant changes to the targets that pupils and teachers use. Senior and middle leaders have worked proactively in training staff to understand age-related standards in writing. As a result, teachers have raised their expectations.

Teachers typically set work that matches the abilities of pupils more closely and leaders track each pupil's work concisely. As a result, pupils in Year 6 have shown significant improvement in their writing. Current assessment information suggests a striking rise in the proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected and higher standards.

- Pupils' attainment in writing at the end of Year 2 has risen to be broadly in line with the national average. This represents good progress from pupils' starting points in the early years. However, the number of pupils attaining the highest standard in writing could be greater than it currently is. While looking at books, I found that the quality of writing in lessons other than literacy was variable. For example, pupils' handwriting in history lessons was not of the same high standard as within their 'extended writing' books. In some cases, teachers did not correct simple errors in grammar and punctuation in science books. This limits pupils' progress in developing high-quality writing and achieving the standard of which they are capable.
- For my final line of enquiry, I focused on the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils. I decided on this due to the lower attainment of these pupils across the school. Leaders have worked proactively in ensuring that disadvantaged pupils receive well-targeted support. The collaboration of senior and middle leaders in implementing strategies has clearly made a difference. For example, leaders have carried out targeted learning walks and book scrutinies to deepen their understanding of barriers faced by certain pupils. Support from the local authority and the diocese has enabled you and your team to sharpen your planning and evaluation of extra help to support disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders make effective use of assessment procedures to know how pupils are progressing and to intervene to help them when necessary. Leaders know disadvantaged pupils very well and teachers involve these pupils carefully in lessons through deeper questioning to ensure that they make strong progress. As a result, the attainment of disadvantaged children at the end of early years has risen significantly. Similarly, disadvantaged pupils' attainment within phonics in Year 1 is now high and in line with their peers in the school.
- Targeted interventions have resulted in progress typically rising for disadvantaged pupils. Nevertheless, some differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers remain. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils working at the higher standards is improving but remains considerably below their peers. In part, this is because leaders have not always identified early enough when extra support is not as successful as they intended. Further work is necessary to ensure that disadvantaged pupils typically make the substantial progress necessary to attain as well as their peers nationally with similar starting points.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- absence rates, including persistent absence rates, for disadvantaged pupils reduce so they are at least in line with pupils nationally
- pupils are given high-quality opportunities to develop their writing in subjects other than literacy
- disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, make substantial and sustained progress over time so their attainment is at least in line with their peers nationally.

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

Yours sincerely

Noeman Anwar
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I conducted meetings with you and other leaders. I scrutinised a range of documentation including records relating to safeguarding, attendance, assessment and pupil premium provision. I visited classrooms alongside school leaders and considered work in pupils' books together with you and your team. I held meetings with members of the governing body and a representative from the London Diocesan Board for Schools. I also reviewed responses to Ofsted's online surveys, including 71 responses from parents.