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Mrs Eliza Hollis
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hollis

Short inspection of Stoke Bruerne Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 July 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. The school is very well led and managed. You and all other leaders, staff and governors are fully committed to the school becoming even better. You work to the same ends and many parents and the pupils hold the school in high regard. You have successfully managed the considerable number of staffing changes over the last year or so and the quality of teaching and the use of assessment continues to be good. You tackle any weaknesses in teaching that arise with great determination. The staff respect your leadership and management and judge that you help them to improve the quality of their work. The good teaching throughout the school results in pupils making good progress in all classes. Pupils' attainment and progress are much improved in key stage 1. In key stage 2, although standards of writing are improving, you are aware that this year's national assessment results for Year 6 pupils and pupils books show that too few pupils attain the higher levels in writing and particularly in mathematics.

You clearly know the school inside out and are aware of exactly where further improvements are needed. The other leaders and the two members of the school's governing body I met share this accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Because governors are well organised and know the school so well, they are able not only to support you and other leaders, but also to keep everyone on their toes by asking challenging questions to ensure that the school continues to improve. Your knowledge of the progress of individual pupils is strong.

The reports that you and other leaders provide to teachers after you observe them teach and look at pupils' work give staff a clear understanding of their teaching and help them improve. However, you do not pay sufficient attention in these reports to the progress of different groups of pupils.

Key to the aims of your school is providing high-quality care and personal guidance for all pupils. Pupils are very well looked after and feel safe and secure in school. Pupils told me that they thoroughly enjoy school and rates of attendance this year indicate that pupils have maintained the school's track record of good attendance. Pupils in school are cheerful, polite and helpful. One Year 6 pupil reflected the views of others when she told me that, although she felt well prepared for her secondary school, she would miss the family atmosphere of Stoke Bruerne where 'everyone looks out for one another'.

The staff and pupils benefit considerably from being part of the Forest Church of England Federation of schools. Staff and leaders in the four schools learn from one another. The local authority has also had a positive impact on the school's improvement, especially in regard to the improved writing results, and has worked closely with the headteacher to ensure that any weaknesses that come to light are addressed.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, other staff and governors take your responsibilities for safeguarding very seriously. Records are detailed and of good quality. The files you showed me indicate that staff make timely referrals when they have any concerns. Leaders ensure that any concerns are properly followed up, involving external support where necessary. All required checks on staff and other adults who are involved with the school are carried out carefully and recorded meticulously. Leaders, governors and staff undertake regular training to ensure that you are all kept up to date on child protection and safeguarding issues.

Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and they act with respect for the safety of other pupils. The arrangements to keep the pupils safe during the current building works have been carefully formulated and are effective. Pupils are kept updated on how to keep themselves safe online. All pupils I asked were proud to tell me that bullying is very rare at their school, and that if it does happen, they have confidence that adults will deal with it quickly and effectively.

Inspection findings

- You undertook a careful analysis of the national assessment results for 2016. You were fully aware of exactly where improvement was needed had a detailed understanding of which pupils had done well and how some could have done better. We are both aware that cohorts in your school are very small and that national data therefore does not give a fully reliable picture of pupils' achievement at your school. We therefore looked closely at your school records based on teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment and progress. These show

that overall pupils are making better progress than previously, especially in key stage 1.

- Your procedures for checking that teachers' assessments are accurate are thorough and leaders not only carry out personal checks on teachers' assessments, but also help teachers to keep their assessments honest and accurate. Your procedures for comparing pupils' work with teachers in other schools are thorough and help teachers to make accurate assessments. Your records are therefore accurate.
- I also looked at pupils' work during the inspection and this work reflects closely the assessments that are included in your school records. It is clear from looking at pupils' work and from your records that pupils make good progress throughout the school. Progress in reading has continued to be good; progress in writing is better than the standards reflected in last year's national assessment results. Progress in mathematics is a little weaker than in reading and writing. The results of the 2017 national assessments became available just before the inspection and results have improved on last year's. Reception children attained above national averages, Year 1 pupils attained above last year's national averages in their phonics screening and Year 2 pupils did much better than last year in their national assessments. In Year 2, results were much better in terms of the proportion of pupils who attained the nationally expected standards. Also, considerably more pupils exceeded nationally expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics, reflecting greater challenge for the most able in the youngest two classes.
- This year, results for Year 6 pupils in national assessments improved in reading and writing, but mathematics results were not as strong because too few pupils attained above the standards expected for their age.
- Middle leaders now play a strong role in helping improve provision and pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility. They benefit from the strong guidance that you provide as headteacher. They are also helped by working closely with governors who support and challenge them to carry out their roles. They benefit from working in the other three schools in the federation and middle leaders carry out their roles confidently and effectively. They contribute well the school's good capacity to continue to improve in the future.
- Although reports of observations of teaching and of analyses of pupils' work produced by you and middle leaders provide clear guidance to staff, these reports do not include sufficient analysis of the progress of different groups of pupils in school, particularly of the most able pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' attainment in mathematics is improved by the end of Year 6, particularly that of higher attaining pupils
- leaders' analyses of teaching and of pupils' work include a clear evaluation of the progress and attainment of groups of pupils, including the most able.

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

Yours sincerely

Roger Sadler
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Before and during the inspection I analysed the performance of the school in comparison with other schools nationally. During the inspection, I evaluated the school's own records of pupils' attainment and progress. We jointly observed teaching and learning in all classes. I also looked at past and current work of pupils of different abilities and compared pupils' work with the school's assessment records. A meeting was held with two members of the governing body and a conversation was held with a representative of the local authority. I analysed documents, including plans for the school's improvement and reports showing the school's view of its own performance. I looked at recent reports provided on the school's effectiveness by the local authority. I evaluated the school's website. Safeguarding documents, policies and records relating to pupils' personal development, behaviour, welfare and safety and attendance were inspected. I took account of the 24 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 19 responses to the Ofsted free-text service. I also spoke to 14 parents of 22 pupils as they brought their children to school. Pupils' views were gathered through a pre-arranged meeting and informally around the school. The views of staff were gathered by talking to them and by considering the 10 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.