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Mrs Maxine McGarr
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Dear Mrs McGarr

Short inspection of St Andrew's CofE VA Primary School, Lopham

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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since then, the school has become part of a federation of three small schools, with a joint governing body and with one executive headteacher. You became headteacher in April 2017, after a period as acting headteacher. You, your staff and governors have ensured that the school's strengths have been maintained and built on. Areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. These were to improve writing and to ensure that teachers are better at planning work to meet pupils' needs.

You and your team ensure that St Andrew's is a school that caters for the individual and looks for the unique talent and enthusiasm in every child. Pupils at the school achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics, but also benefit from everything else the interesting curriculum offers. Pupils have a chance to shine in many different aspects such as sports, music and increasingly the arts. Pupils at St Andrew's are well supported in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They learn about the wider world and about the lives of others in geography and religious education lessons. They are well supported in developing their social skills because they work together and help each other in lessons and in the playground. Assemblies develop pupils' understanding of right and wrong and remind pupils of the importance of positive attitudes such as perseverance and determination. Consequently, pupils are helped to become caring and thoughtful individuals. The comment of one parent typifies those of others: 'I would not hesitate to give a substantial amount of credit for my son's character to St Andrew's School and in turn to the caring, Christian values which are gently promoted.'

Leaders, staff and governors work together effectively as a team. Governors have strengthened their roles since your appointment, and provide support and challenge in equal measure. They are proactive in identifying where things could be better. For example, they ask for more detailed information about the progress of specific groups of pupils, and for subject leaders to provide them with regular reports at governing body meetings. They also support you in implementing necessary changes such as improving the school's system for managing pupils' assessments.

Teaching is good because teachers know each child well and plan for their individual needs. Pupils whom I spoke with were unanimous in their view that 'Teachers don't allow you to be lazy. You always have to try your best.' Pupils' work shows that teachers have high expectations of pupils and provide appropriate support to help them improve over time. You support teachers well, promoting their professional development. You have used the opportunities provided by the federation to extend their skills by leading subjects across the three schools and by developing their leadership roles. You recognise that there is more work to be done to ensure that all leaders are confident in their roles.

Pupils like their school and are justly proud of it. Pupils talk about the many aspects that they enjoy, and about how friendly and welcoming everyone is at the school. Pupils say that behaviour at the school is good because everyone is friendly and occasional fall-outs are quickly resolved. Parents are supportive of the school. The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that their child is happy at school and they would recommend the school to another parent.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that a strong culture of safeguarding has been established at the school. You make sure that all necessary checks on staff are carried out rigorously and recorded appropriately. Visitors to the school are checked and provided with appropriate information about safeguarding. You have improved systems for recording concerns about pupils so that it is clear what action has been taken and why. You make sure that all staff receive regular training about the different aspects of safeguarding and, as a result, staff know what signs to look for that may indicate that a child is at risk.

You make sure that pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe outside school: for example, providing road safety lessons and teaching pupils about how to keep themselves safe when using technology. Pupils whom I spoke to demonstrated that they have a good knowledge of what they should and should not do online and what to do if they come across something that worries them. Pupils say bullying is very rare at school but they are confident that any incident would be dealt with by adults. As a result, pupils are kept safe in school, and are well prepared to keep themselves safe outside school.

Inspection findings

- The first area I looked at during the inspection was how well pupils make progress in writing. This was an area for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. However, published assessment information indicates that standards in writing in Years 2 and 6 in 2016 were above those found nationally. You also provided me with the most

recent Year 2 and 6 assessments. These show that again in 2017 pupils in Year 6 achieved well in writing. In Year 2, which was a very small group of pupils, the majority, but not all, reached the expected standard.

- Together we looked at pupils' writing in all classes. I found that pupils enjoy writing and are given plentiful opportunities to write across the curriculum. For example, pupils had written at length about how to keep themselves safe online, about a circus day that they had obviously enjoyed and about science experiments. These opportunities for writing enable pupils to apply and develop their skills within meaningful contexts, and contribute to the good progress that the majority of pupils are making in writing.
- Teachers plan tasks for pupils which are well matched to pupils' needs. Good support is provided for developing writing skills, for example through the provision of word mats and subject-specific vocabulary which helps pupils to extend their word choices. Pupils know what they need to include in each piece of writing – for example, exciting adjectives or extended sentences because teachers are explicit about their expectations for pupils of differing capabilities.
- Teachers provide regular opportunities to learn the technical skills of writing, such as punctuation and grammar, and also to develop writing stamina through extended writing tasks. Consequently, the majority of pupils develop fluency and flair in writing. However, weaker spelling affects the quality of some pupils' writing and steps taken by leaders to improve spelling are not proving sufficiently effective.
- The next area I looked at during the inspection was the quality of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for pupils who are disadvantaged. This was because pupil numbers in published data are very small for these groups and I wanted to check that these pupils make good progress.
- You are currently the leader for special educational needs, although this will change in September following a new appointment. You know pupils and their individual needs well, and ensure that provision is planned to meet these needs.
- Careful and regular evaluation of support provided is carried out. You assess pupils who take part in interventions every few weeks to check if support is making a difference, and you make sure that interventions that are not working are stopped and not repeated. Additional adults support pupils well. They are sensitive to pupils' needs and take care to allow pupils to develop increasing independence as they get older and more confident. As a result of the good support provided, these pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to others in the school and by Year 6 most reach the standard expected or above. This is because support for disadvantaged pupils is appropriate to their needs. Leaders make sure that pupils' academic needs are supported through additional small-group or one-to-one work, and also their social and emotional needs through nurture groups and art therapy. The most able disadvantaged pupils are also helped, for example to develop their self-confidence through joining the school council and taking part in school trips subsidised by the school.
- The good provision for disadvantaged pupils is not reflected in the published plans for the use of pupil premium funding. These plans are too general and do not provide governors with sufficient detail about how funding is being used in practice and what is working most effectively.

- The final area that we agreed I should look at was the contribution the wider curriculum makes to pupils' progress. I found that a broad curriculum is in place which pupils enjoy. Pupils, when asked about what they enjoy at school, said how much they enjoy art, physical education and music in school.
- There is an impressive range of enrichment opportunities provided by this small school. These include after-school clubs such as gardening, netball and football, a wide range of music lessons including piano and trumpet lessons, themed events such as science week and cultural days, dance events and sports competitions. These enhance and enrich pupils' experiences so that they are keen to come to school. This is reflected in your attendance rates for this academic year which are above average and have risen since you became headteacher.
- Work in pupils' books is of a good standard for many subjects although sometimes, for example in science, pupils' work does not demonstrate that they have had opportunities to reflect on what they have learned about scientific concepts from practical work carried out. This is because leaders have not considered how learning through practical and oral work can best be captured so that teachers can use this in their planning for subsequent tasks.
- Subject leaders are developing their roles in taking their subjects forward. They have clear and regular assessments in place but their collation and use of assessment information is not as strong as it should be. As a result, not all subject leaders are using the information they have about pupils' achievement to best identify where pupils are making good progress and where progress is less strong.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- subject leaders further develop their roles in improving teaching and learning through better use of assessment information to identify where pupils' progress is best and where improvements may be needed
- subject leaders support teachers in developing systems for capturing learning in practical tasks so that this is used to inform teachers' subsequent planning
- plans for the use of pupil premium funding more accurately reflect the school's good practice in meeting the needs of disadvantaged pupils.
- spelling is improved through the effective implementation of the school's chosen programmes.

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

Yours sincerely

Maria Curry
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, with other leaders and with three members of the governing body. I met with a group of pupils from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. I scrutinised a range of documents, including information on pupils' progress, safeguarding, development planning and the school's self-evaluation. I visited all classes and evaluated pupils' work. I checked the school's website and found it to meet requirements on the publication of specified information.