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Mr Sean Davies
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Dear Mr Davies

Short inspection of Christ Church CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 September 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 April 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 needs of pupils are understood and learning is planned precisely so that current pupils make good rates of progress. Pupils' progress is checked rigorously so that leaders can analyse where staff are having the most impact and where further improvements can be made. School leaders are highly ambitious for pupils' pastoral and academic needs. As a result, pupils make good progress and leaders have ensured that they are well prepared for the next stage in their learning. Leaders provide effective support and challenge to enable all staff and pupils to be successful. For example, the caring and compassionate ethos of the school extends to staff and the wider community, successfully embracing diversity through a caring and nurturing approach to supporting their well-being. School leaders are well respected in the community because they have built a rapport based on trust and mutual respect, which is also reflected in the school's ethos and values. Many parents commented during the inspection about how the school felt part of their extended family and that school leaders really cared about them and their children. Parents overwhelmingly stated that they felt their children enjoyed school, felt safe and were well looked after by staff. One parent stated that Christ Church was like 'one big family, because the staff involve you in your child's learning and in celebrating their successes in assemblies'.

Leaders provide a strong steer for improvement, ensuring that actions reflect the specific needs of their pupils and community. The school has the best interests of the children at the forefront of all they do. As a result, the personal, social and emotional well-being of pupils is a strength of the school. Leaders have created an environment that promotes and celebrates learning through being an inclusive school, where all are valued, cared for and supported. Governors are effective because they have a secure knowledge of the school, its strengths and weaknesses. Governors are very involved in gathering information for themselves about the effectiveness of the work of the school, for example by conducting their own surveys of pupils and reviewing the work in pupils' workbooks.

Pupils make good progress because adults use assessment information effectively to tailor learning to meet the specific needs of pupils, providing the right level of challenge. Pupils who are new arrivals have their needs assessed quickly by the school because it has effective systems to identify pupils' levels of need and put in place appropriate strategies to support them. For example, the school's nurture provision is used effectively to support pupils who have specific social and emotional needs to develop the skills they need to be successful in their academic learning.

Pupils behave well in lessons, at breaktimes and around the school. Pupils are eager to learn and settle quickly to their learning in lessons because adults make the work interesting. In lessons, pupils have regular opportunities to discuss and share their learning, reflecting on 'the how and the why' to develop a deeper understanding of what they are learning. For example, the school's recent work in teaching philosophy is helping pupils develop a structure for exploring more deeply their understanding of a particular theme or topic. Pupils have a love of reading and this was articulated by a number of children who talked passionately about the books they have read and their favourite authors. Pupils are proud of their work and the school regularly celebrates pupils' work in vibrant displays around the school and in assemblies.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding because leaders have ensured that safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose, and records are detailed and of a high quality.

The school is a safe environment. Pupils' welfare is at the forefront of all the school does. Training for all staff is regular and appropriate for the needs of the school and its context. Training has been given on female genital mutilation, 'Prevent' duty and domestic violence because of possible risks to pupils. The school has tailored its training to ensure that staff have the knowledge and understanding of these risks. Adults are clear about what they should do if they have any concerns. Leaders, governors and staff have a good understanding of the specific safeguarding concerns that relate to the context of the school and are alert to issues, including the risks of children going missing from education. Leaders ensure that where a response or action is required from outside agencies, they vigorously challenge them to act in the best interests of the pupils.

Children state that they feel safe at school and adults respond quickly if they have concerns or need help with their learning.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have ensured that the teaching of reading has a high profile across the school's curriculum. You have developed a culture that promotes and fosters a love of reading among the pupils. The teaching of reading is improving across the school, resulting in improving rates of progress and outcomes for current cohorts. The majority are making good or better progress. Pupils enter school with skills, knowledge and understanding well below those that are typical for their age. Pupils make rapid progress across Nursery and Reception because of the effective strategies across the early years foundation stage and key stage 1 to develop phonics and early reading skills. Pupils heard reading during the inspection did so fluently and at pace. They demonstrated good comprehension skills and referenced the text to exemplify their responses. Groups of pupils who have specific barriers to learning or who need to catch up to their peers receive appropriate and effective interventions and support to enable them to make good progress. Although the school is focusing on developing pupils' comprehension skills, pupils do not often respond to questions in written form as well as they do verbally. Pupils still lack the skills to respond accurately and succinctly through written responses to reading comprehension questions.
- Across the school, there is a strong culture of promoting writing from the very start of school. Staff encourage early writing development, ensuring that writing materials are readily available and creating meaningful opportunities for pupils to write and apply their taught writing skills in context. School leaders have ensured that the school's curriculum provides a wealth of appropriate opportunities across a wide variety of subjects for pupils to write in context for meaning. Leaders have been successful in securing significant improvements in the technical skills of writing, and in particular grammar, punctuation and spelling. Work scrutinised during the inspection highlights that the majority of pupils and groups of pupils in current cohorts are making good progress. However, not enough pupils are writing to the same high standard as they do in their literacy books in other subjects across the curriculum.
- Arithmetic is a strength of the school because leaders have established a systematic and consistent approach to developing number across the school. As a result, pupils in current cohorts make good progress. Pupils have effective strategies to support their calculation of number and readily available resources to support their work in shape, space and measures. Consequently, pupils' work in these elements of mathematics is strong. However, reasoning, logic and problem solving are less well developed. As a result, pupils have limited opportunities to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts and reach higher outcomes.
- You have effective systems to ensure and promote good attendance. As a result, attendance has improved to near the national average. You have given attendance a high priority and committed time and resources to reduce absence

rates among all groups successfully, particularly those who are persistently absent. Leaders challenge parents in order to promote the value of good attendance, and through your safeguarding procedures, in identifying patterns of poor attendance, you have successfully targeted and improved attendance.

- Through your effective positive behaviour strategy, you have ensured that pupils behave well, and the very small minority with challenging behaviour are well supported to improve. You have fostered a culture of trust and mutual respect where pupils feel safe and secure. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school during informal times. Pupils have good attitudes towards their learning and want to do well. As a result, lessons are productive, enabling pupils to make good progress in their learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching continues to develop grammar, spelling and punctuation across the wider curriculum to the same standard as that demonstrated in pupils' literacy work
- teaching continues to develop pupils' comprehension of what they read and their skills in applying inference to improve outcomes in reading
- teaching further develops the use of reasoning, logic and problem solving in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

John Demmerling
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your senior leadership team. I also met with a group of governors. I met with a representative from the local authority. You and your deputy headteacher joined me on visits to classes. We looked at examples of pupils' work.

I talked to pupils about their work during visits to their classes and informally spoke to pupils around school at different times of the school day. I reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation of its performance, the school development plan and documents relating to keeping pupils safe. We discussed the most recent information about pupils' achievement. I took account of 20 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the free-text

comments made. I reviewed the 38 responses from members of staff and 50 responses from pupils to the online inspection questionnaires. I spoke with parents at the end of the school day. I also looked at information published on the school's website.