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5 October 2017

Mr Adrian Vye and Mrs Kirsty Robson
Co-headteachers
St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Winterbourne
Linden Close
Winterbourne
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BS36 1LG

Dear Mr Vye and Mrs Robson,

**Short inspection of St Michael's Church of England Primary School,
Winterbourne**

Following my visit to the school on 12 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As co-headteachers, you work together effectively, sharing the headship role across the week. The deputy headteacher role is shared to good effect between two members of the senior leadership team. Changes have taken place smoothly. As a senior leadership team, you have a breadth of skills and experience to contribute effectively to the future development of the school. Since the previous inspection, a new early years setting has been established on the school site. Children's education in the Reception Year is benefiting from the strong working partnership developed with the pre-school.

During the inspection, pupils and parents stressed how harmonious the school community is. As leaders you have set a culture where all feel encouraged and understood. As one parent said, reflecting the opinion of many, 'There is a high level of care and respect demonstrated and instilled in the children.' Pupils show their respect through good behaviour, diligence in lessons and the careful presentation of their work.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to improve the consistency of teaching, particularly in writing. Recently, there have been some unavoidable changes in staff but, despite this, all parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children are taught well. This is testament to the impact of your leadership on teaching and the high-quality staff development you provide.

Staffs are teaching writing confidently and consistently. They stimulate pupils to write expressively and accurately in subjects across the curriculum. Recent assessment information at key stage 2 shows improvements in the standards pupils reach and the progress they make. You have recognised that by the end of key stage 1 pupils' spelling is not accurate enough. For some pupils, this limits their chances of attaining the higher standard. Nonetheless, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level has increased.

You were also asked to develop wider leadership in the school. The school's plans for improvement involve all subject leaders and they base their decisions for future plans accurately on how well pupils are achieving in their subject.

Experienced and effective governors have given you good support to maintain the quality of education. They undertake training to keep up to date and work closely with subject leaders to check that plans are improving pupils' progress. You agree that improvements to the governors' plans for additional funding for disadvantaged pupils have only just begun and need further work.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff have benefited from high-quality and regular training in safeguarding. As a result, they are observant and attentive to pupils' needs. Staff understand the procedures for reporting concerns and have confidence that leaders take prompt and appropriate action. Leaders work effectively to support families and involve other agencies to protect pupils who may be at risk.

Leaders manage procedures which underpin the culture of safeguarding well and regularly review policies. When recruiting staff or volunteers to work in school, leaders ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out promptly. Governors make regular checks on safeguarding arrangements.

Pupils feel safe in school and say that other pupils are friendly. As one pupil said, 'We don't argue very much and we don't exclude people.' They are sure that any incidents of possible bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. Teachers provide a secure environment in which pupils can develop.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I looked at how consistently mathematics is being taught across the school. This was because pupils' progress by the end of Year 6 dipped in 2016. Subject development plans show you responded quickly and put in place staff development and new schemes of work. As a result, standards rose significantly in the 2017 assessments.
- Teachers follow the school's practice of giving pupils opportunities to investigate number patterns and solve problems. However, samples of pupils' work and recent assessments show that while pupils build and retain their knowledge of arithmetic securely, they do not retain the ability to apply their understanding to

problem-solving or reasoning about mathematics as well. Consequently, you recognise that for recent improvements to be maintained, this aspect of mathematics teaching needs to be strengthened.

- My second line of enquiry was to check on the impact of additional funding to hasten the progress of disadvantaged pupils. The work of disadvantaged pupils in lessons and in their workbooks shows that they are making good progress. You regularly check that disadvantaged pupils are flourishing. Pupils benefit from additional lessons in reading. This accelerates their progress and helps them catch up to the standard expected for their age. During the inspection, we saw good examples of teachers giving targeted support to disadvantaged pupils based on close assessment of their needs.
- Governors have attended recent training on how to plan the use of pupil premium funding more strategically. This happened recently so plans are still in the early stages. Current plans are unclear in mathematics. Pupils are not catching up as quickly as they do in other subjects.
- The quality of teaching in phonics was my next line of enquiry. In 2017 there was a dip in the phonics screening check. In the Reception class, children make rapid progress in learning sounds that letters make. Most enter Year 1 with reading skills in line with or above the national average. However, teachers in key stage 1 are not using assessment to place pupils in the correct phase. Therefore, pupils do not learn phonic skills and spellings effectively.
- My fourth line of enquiry was to explore whether children make good progress in Reception. Strong links with local early years settings means that children's transition to school is managed very well. Teachers are ambitious for children's achievement and this year have built a detailed picture of what individual children need to learn next. There are precise plans for all children's learning, including for the most able children and those who are disadvantaged. Teaching is led well in Reception. Adults challenge children and make learning fun. We saw children, only a week into school, hunting excitedly for numbers, including teen numbers, around the stimulating indoor and outdoor classrooms.
- Finally, I looked at the school's strategies to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent from school. You have acted promptly using external agencies and good safeguarding procedures to tackle all unauthorised absences from school. Last year, you eradicated the persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the teaching and curriculum for mathematics develops pupils' ability to apply their mathematical knowledge in a range of contexts
- governors' strategic plans to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils are closely targeted to overcome pupils' specific barriers to learning

- pupils make secure progress in phonic skills and spelling so that more exceed the standards expected for their age in phonics and writing at the end of key stage 1.

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

Yours sincerely

Wendy Marriott
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I had meetings with you and other leaders. I met with a group of governors and read recent governors' minutes and visit notes. I discussed the school's plans for improvement with you and the governors. I spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone.

Together, we visited all classrooms and spoke to pupils as they were working. I spoke to pupils in a discussion and heard a group of pupils read. I observed and talked to pupils at lunchtime. We discussed the current assessment of pupils across the school and looked at examples of their work in English, mathematics, science and humanities.

During the day, I discussed safeguarding with you, your school administrator and several members of staff. I took account of the 60 responses to Parent View and parents' comments.