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Mrs Helen Green
Headteacher
St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Cromhall
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Dear Mrs Green

Short inspection of St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Cromhall

Following my visit to the school on 19 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since the previous inspection, several new members of staff have joined the school, including you as headteacher. You have worked effectively with these staff, especially developing the skills of your leaders of mathematics and English. You have worked well with all staff and parents to increase the number of opportunities for pupils to be engaged in after-school events.

There have also been changes in the governing body, with a new chair and new governors. Under the direction of the new chair, governance at the school is a strength. Governors support the school well and challenge you to drive the school forward. There is a clear and strategic direction for school leadership. They know what needs to be done to help staff to ensure that the pupils continue to achieve well and make good progress.

The strong relationships and mutual respect between teachers and pupils contribute positively to their engagement and enthusiasm in learning. Staff support and challenge pupils to do their best. Those pupils I spoke to are ambitious for their future. One pupil, whose view was typical, told me, 'I like this school because

everyone is respectful but the teachers still make us work hard.' Pupils particularly enjoy sharing their learning with one another, for example through assemblies.

Pupils of all ages help each other and value the friendships they have. They are also very appreciative of the extensive sporting and extra-curricular experiences the school offers.

Parents report that they feel very positive about how the school has developed under your leadership. They agree that 'the recently appointed head has really brought the school forward, and I can see the difference in the children's homework, classwork and learning environments without losing the close-knit family feel of the school'.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is effective. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. Documentation demonstrates that staff in the school carry out thorough checks to ensure that the school is a safe place to be.

The culture of the school is one where every member of staff and volunteer is aware of their responsibilities and receives regular training and support. You, other senior leaders and governors are rigorous in your engagement with external agencies to ensure that they follow up concerns raised.

Pupils state that they feel safe at the school. They support one another if they have a concern or worry and know that staff in school will help them too. They know how to keep themselves safe online and are clear about the dangers of speaking to strangers and of keeping safe when crossing roads. The school uses the local village effectively to create real-life situations where children have to respond to risks, including contacting the emergency services.

Responses to the parent online questionnaires were positive in stating that they feel children are safe and well-cared-for in school.

Inspection findings

- My first key line of enquiry examined how successful leaders' actions have been in improving attendance at the school. You and the governing body have been robust in tackling this issue. You have celebrated good attendance, providing incentives for children in the form of letters and postcards home. You and your governors have also been clear about setting out the importance of attending school and demonstrating the impact low attendance has on future educational success. Strong and direct leadership has resulted in attendance improving for all groups for the previous academic year. This is at least in line with the national average, and placed the school as the most improved in the local authority.

- My second trail focused on the actions taken by leaders to secure improvements in progress and attainment in key stage 2. In 2016, progress in reading was significantly below the national average. This was also an area for improvement identified at the previous inspection. You have taken immediate steps to address this, focusing on raising the profile of reading with pupils and parents. Workshops for parents demonstrated successfully to them the importance of talking to their children about their reading. These workshops also supported parents to understand how phonics is taught. You have effectively made reading a key focus for all adults in the school and wider community. Interactive displays, book swaps, second-hand book sales, taking part in World Book Day and bedtime story events have significantly raised the importance of reading. As a consequence, results in both attainment and progress in reading at key stage 1 and key stage 2 have improved.
- The performance of the most able girls in key stage 2 was also an area I considered. The introduction of milestones for pupils in reading, mathematics and writing has added rigour to pupils' learning. Pupils challenge themselves in their learning through the introduction of bronze, silver and gold activities. Training has supported teachers' subject knowledge well and enabled them to raise their expectations of what pupils can do. Teachers make sure that pupils solve problems and can explain their methods, thus ensuring greater challenge. Work in pupils' books and internal information provided by the school confirm that a greater focus on higher-order skills has resulted in groups of pupils, including girls, making better progress at the end of Year 5.
- My next trail examined the progress and attainment of pupils in mathematics at key stages 1 and 2. You recognised this as an area which the school needed to improve when you were appointed. Your strong leadership, which has focused on assessing pupils against what they are able to achieve, has had a good impact on their progress. You encourage staff to work with other schools and provide training which focuses specifically on mastery of mathematics. Careful monitoring of teaching by the mathematics leader has resulted in improvements in learning. Extra help for pupils who need further support has also had a strong impact.
- As a result of these changes, pupils' overall attainment in mathematics rose to above the national average in 2017. More pupils achieved the higher standards and overall progress improved. Nevertheless, you understand that more opportunities need to be provided for pupils to develop their mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- My final trail focused on how the curriculum, and its delivery, supports the progress and attainment of pupils in a range of subjects and in different year groups. You ensure that the pupils receive a wide variety of curriculum experiences to extend learning. For example, the construction of gas masks as part of a design and technology project linked well to history and science. However, work in pupils' books confirms that the quality of writing in subjects other than English is less well developed.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- teachers develop and improve pupils' writing skills in subjects across the curriculum
- there is a greater focus for pupils to apply and deepen their mathematical skills throughout the curriculum.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Gloucester, 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

Matthew Shanks
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, you joined me in observing learning in classrooms. Together, we looked at a large number of pupils' books covering a wide range of subjects and years.

I held meetings with senior leaders and four governors as well as speaking to staff at lunchtime. I scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans. I also looked at surveys of pupils, safeguarding and child protection records, and the school's assessment information. I spoke with a member of the local authority with responsibility for supporting the school.

I talked with pupils in classes as well as at lunchtime to learn about their experience of school. I met with parents before school and also took into account the views of 21 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.