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Mrs S Kerwin
Headteacher
St Andrew's Maghull Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mrs Kerwin

Short inspection of St Andrew's Maghull Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 December 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, your leadership team and your staff ensure that your school is highly inclusive and that every child matters. Your teaching and learning exemplify your school's aims, 'Together in God we learn, inspire and grow'. Your strong leadership has established a caring and calm ethos that ensures everybody, including visitors, feel welcomed. The well-being of pupils and staff is a priority. It is to your credit that you have retained a stable staff for many years. You have created a strong and highly skilled leadership team who drive improvements in their areas of responsibility. Staff morale is high and pupils are happy.

Since the previous inspection, you have established a new leadership structure which enables you to implement improvements across the school. Governors have a wide set of skills. They use these skills well to support the school in its improvements and challenge any decisions made. They demonstrate visionary leadership and a desire to make the school the best it can possibly be. All leaders share the same ambition for the school. They speak with clarity about what the strengths and areas for development are in the school. Leaders are aware of their roles in tackling weaker aspects within the school.

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are impressive. They are proud to wear their uniforms and love

coming to school. Throughout the school, pupils are very polite. Pupils want to succeed. They are highly respectful of each other and they really value the relationships they have together. A view held by many of the pupils is that, 'The best thing about the school is our friends.' In addition, pupils say how kind and caring their teachers are. It is no surprise that the vast majority of pupils have good attendance.

Parents are very positive about the school. As one parent commented, 'The school is a pillar of the community. It is not just a school, it is a family. I am proud my children are part of it.' The overwhelming majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would highly recommend the school. Parents are of the opinion that the school does everything it can to develop pupils emotionally and academically.

One of the aspects you were asked to improve in the last inspection was to accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics. Over the last few years, published performance information has shown that you have met this challenge. You have completed a range of tasks to effect such improvement. These include strong developments in staff training, improvements in checking pupils' progress and investment in quality resources. Teachers also plan more carefully so that tasks match closely pupils' abilities, including tasks which develop pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. Work in pupils' books and the lessons observed demonstrates that pupils, including the most able, are achieving well. Pupils were engaged in their learning and are keen to challenge themselves further and learn from their mistakes.

The previous inspection also identified that you needed to accelerate pupils' progress in writing. While the progress that pupils make in their writing has improved, it has not improved at the rate that you would have liked. The proportion of pupils who achieve the national standards in key stage 1 and key stage 2 is still below the national average. We agreed that there is still more to do in this area.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose, including protocols and practices for record-keeping. You have ensured that all staff and governors receive appropriate training regularly to understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. Leaders and staff discuss concerns about pupils' well-being. Relationships between staff and parents are a strength of the school. Leaders know families well. As a result, they support them in a variety of ways when necessary. Those who are responsible for staff recruitment have completed training at the appropriate level. They conduct rigorous checks on staff when they are recruited to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.

Pupils have strong relationships with staff, which helps them to feel safe at school. Pupils were keen to tell me that the teachers 'make sure we are always safe'. Pupils know how to stay safe on the internet and when using social media. Leaders have

established different leadership roles for pupils to develop their understanding of keeping safe. For example, your team of older pupils, who are trained by the police, support leaders in ensuring that the roads outside school are safe. They encourage parents to park away from the school. Your playtime buddies also told me how they keep each other safe at playtimes. They told me what signs they look for when pupils need support on the playgrounds. Pupils at the school actively look out for each other.

Inspection findings

- At the start of this inspection we agreed on a number of key lines of enquiry. The first of these looked at how effectively leaders are improving outcomes for key stage 1 pupils in reading. This was because in 2016 the proportion of pupils who achieved at the expected and higher standard in key stage 1 was below the national average. You have raised the profile of reading and introduced a range of strategies to improve pupils' progress. You evaluate the quality of the teaching of reading more sharply and ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have access to targeted training. Pupils who need additional help read regularly to adults in school. The teaching of phonics is strong across key stage 1. Teachers build effectively on this good foundation through consistent approaches to the teaching of reading. The changes you have implemented in key stage 1 have ensured that pupils now make good progress.
- The second line of enquiry considered the progress that pupils across the school make in writing. This is because in previous years too few pupils did as well as other pupils nationally. Leaders have established new systems to tackle this. The recently appointed English leader has identified the barriers preventing pupils from making strong progress. Sharper monitoring of teaching has ensured that staff receive training to improve their subject knowledge. Teaching is improving, with a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics, spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils use their increased skills to improve their writing. As a result of these changes, achievement in writing in key stage 2 has improved. However, while you acknowledge that pupils make better progress in their writing, pupils' attainment is still below the national expectation. In pupils' work, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length across the curriculum. In our discussions, you agreed that pupils' progress needs to accelerate further.
- Another key line of enquiry considered the attendance and persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils. This was because in 2016 attendance was low and persistent absence was high for these pupils. Your effective leadership has ensured that there are effective systems to check pupils' attendance. Within your weekly attendance meetings, the reasons for any absence are discussed. The number of disadvantaged pupils who have low attendance is small. However, you are keen to remove any barriers that these pupils and families face. For example, you undertake home visits and support families who are struggling to bring their children into school. Individual case studies show that your efforts are improving some disadvantaged pupils' attendance. For a small number of others, the challenge remains.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils make more rapid progress in writing, by providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Kynaston
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and a group of your middle leaders. I spoke with members of the governing body and an officer from the local authority. I spoke with a group of pupils and heard pupils read. Documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation document, the school's improvement plan, external audits, attendance information and safeguarding checks. I reviewed pupils' achievement records and your checks on the quality of teaching. I also visited lessons with you to speak with pupils, looked at examples of pupils' work and observed their behaviour during lessons and as they moved around school. I examined child protection information and minutes from meetings of the governing body. I took account of the 91 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 85 free-text responses. I also took account of the 100 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire and the 16 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. I completed a review of the school's website.