

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mrs S Bayliff  
Headteacher  
Bishop David Sheppard Church of England Primary School  
Devonshire Road  
Southport  
Merseyside  
PR9 7BZ

Dear Mrs Bayliff

### **Short inspection of Bishop David Sheppard Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 31 October 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 November 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 taking up post in September 2016, you have built an effective team of leaders who reflect your passion and hunger to improve the school. You have set the tone for the school's warm Christian character by prioritising pupils' safety and happiness above all else. The well-organised environment is vibrant and welcoming. High-quality displays celebrate pupils' work, such as the colourful Brazilian artwork created by Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. Pupils are keen to learn and they are attentive in class. They enjoy school and value the excellent relationships that they have with you and your staff. The parents responding to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, agree that their children enjoy school because, as one stated, staff 'clearly know and understand what makes the children "tick", so that staff can get the best from them'.

The previous inspection asked the school to improve in a number of ways, such as providing pupils with more opportunities to check on their own work. You have introduced clear targets for writing and mathematics. Pupils use these targets to chart their progress and recognise strengths in their own and others' work.

Your investment in staff development has also resulted in greater consistency in teaching across the school. This is helping to iron out some of the variations in progress of pupils in different year groups, which was another area identified at the last inspection. However, in 2017 pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 dropped markedly in reading and mathematics. This is in stark contrast to previous years, where progress had been very high. As part of this inspection, we agreed to look at some of the reasons for this by

focusing on leaders' response to this dip.

Since the previous inspection, governors' expertise has improved. They challenge and question leaders about the progress and attainment of different groups of pupils. However, we agreed that the information about the use of funding for disadvantaged pupils is not specific enough for governors to account fully for the effectiveness of this funding.

Your sharp and uncompromising evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses means that leaders and governors are aware that there are still improvements to be made at the school. You are aware that further challenge in writing for some of the most able pupils, and a keener focus on pupils' punctuation in key stage 2, are needed to raise standards.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school's safeguarding culture is pervasive and underpins all the work that you and your staff do. The team of staff that you have created to deal with safeguarding is highly effective: they complement each other's roles well. Staff who lead on safeguarding are knowledgeable and caring. They exude a determination to keep pupils safe. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff go to great lengths to ensure that pupils are safe from harm and are confident that leaders act swiftly to address any concerns.

You have identified potential risks to pupils, such as being drawn into gang culture, and have invited visiting speakers and arranged events to combat these areas of concern. Pupils are extremely positive about your approach. They have an excellent awareness of how to keep themselves safe including when online.

### **Inspection findings**

- As part of this inspection, we agreed to look at how effectively leaders use additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment in reading. You have carefully unpicked the reasons why pupils' progress dipped so dramatically in 2017. Leaders have taken swift action to remedy this. They have introduced activities to develop pupils' comprehension skills and reading stamina. The result is that the school's own data for disadvantaged pupils' progress shows that they are progressing well. The school works hard to ensure that pupils are provided with an emotionally secure environment in which they are able to focus on their learning. This results in pupils reading with increasing confidence and fluency. Some children start school in the early years with language skills that are well below those typical of their age. They are supported well throughout the school and make good progress from low starting points. Staff use their knowledge of pupils to target extra support. Teachers plan reading groups to focus on pupils' engagement and individual outcomes. This is resulting in improvements to pupils' progress. Governing body minutes show that governors ask detailed questions about the outcomes for different groups of pupils. However, they lack a clear analysis of how the funding is used to be able to accurately review its effectiveness. You have already recognised this by commissioning an

external review of the funding so that the school's strengths can be fully recognised.

- The second key line of enquiry for this inspection was to look at how effectively middle leaders improve the quality of teaching in their subjects. The leaders for English, mathematics and science work well together. Their checks on the quality of teaching and learning are of a high quality. These checks provide staff with incisive feedback on how to improve their teaching. They also inform clear action plans on how to improve whole-school provision. These plans have been put into action without delay in response to the unexpected dip in progress in 2017. Leaders help staff to develop their skills through regular staff meetings. For example, the mathematics leader has developed a school-wide focus on the use of practical resources to improve pupils' problem-solving skills. Consequently, staff effectively encourage pupils to reason, in depth, about the mathematics that they use. In science, the leader has led meetings on how staff can develop pupils' scientific skills. Leaders track and monitor pupils' progress in their subjects so that they can target their support where it is needed. As a result, pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science is improving.
- Finally, we agreed to look at how effectively pupils are challenged to achieve the highest standards in writing in key stage 2. The English leader ensures that there is consistency in the approach to the teaching of writing. Pupils make good progress throughout key stage 2. This is reflected in the work in pupils' books. Displays of writing across the school show the high quality of some of the work done by pupils. However, some of the more able pupils agree that they are not consistently challenged in lessons. This is evident in pupils' books, where some repeat work that they can already do. For example, pupils who can use commas effectively in their independent work repeat their learning because other pupils have this as a target for improvement. Punctuation errors are also a persistent feature of pupils' written work, particularly in lower key stage 2. We agreed that, while progress is good, improvements can be made to ensure that the progress of some pupils is even better.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the impact of funding for disadvantaged pupils is evaluated more carefully
- tasks are more carefully matched to pupils' next steps in learning, particularly for the more able, so that they are challenged further in writing
- common punctuation errors in pupils' writing are addressed more effectively in lower key stage 2.

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

Steve Bentham

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

**Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I met with leaders and governors to discuss safeguarding and aspects of the school's leadership and management. Together, we visited all classes and spoke to pupils about their work informally during lessons. I reviewed documentation about safeguarding, which included the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff. I spoke with pupils about safeguarding and different aspects of their work. I conducted a scrutiny of pupils' writing and I heard pupils from Year 2, Year 4 and Year 6 read. I reviewed leaders' records of their monitoring of teaching and learning; governors' minutes; the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses; and the school development plan. I took into account 11 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 11 responses to the staff survey.