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Mr Richard Hoskins
Head of School
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Dear Mr Hoskins

Short inspection of St Winnow CofE School

Following my visit to the school on 14 November 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 June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your dedicated leadership inspires trust and confidence across the whole school community and enthusiastic teamwork by staff. The school is part of the Saints Way Church of England Academy Trust, consisting of five Church of England primary schools in the local area. The academy trust leaders, together with governors, share a strong sense of purpose, which is leading to improvements in the school. All are determined to ensure that pupils do as well as they can.

Pupils are well cared for as a result of the school's nurturing ethos. The academy trust's mission of 'a community where leaders learn and learners lead' is central to all aspects of school life. Pupils, parents and staff value this. The overwhelming majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online parent survey were highly complimentary about all aspects of the school. One parent expressed the views of many with the comment, 'I feel the school promotes attitudes of kindness, fairness and acceptance in its pupils.' Inspection evidence supports this view.

Children in the early years receive high-quality support and make good progress from their starting points. For example, an above-average proportion of children reached a good level of development in 2017. Most pupils go on to make strong progress across key stage 1. In 2017, the proportion of pupils working at the expected standard in key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics was better

than national averages. At key stage 2, pupils' progress in reading and writing was broadly average.

In 2017, in key stage 2 national tests, pupils' progress in mathematics, for the small number of children in Year 6, was below the national average. Leaders recognise that achievement in mathematics was lower because pupils, particularly the most able, had not developed some of the more advanced skills in mathematics that they needed. The school has rightly implemented far-reaching changes to mathematics teaching over the past two years and the impact is now beginning to be seen in assessments. Current pupils are making strong progress in mathematics. In particular, progress in key stage 2 is rapidly improving, including for disadvantaged pupils.

At the time of your previous inspection, you were asked to ensure that pupils take more responsibility for their own learning, enabling them to think and learn by themselves. Your work in this regard is highly effective. Pupils, typically, demonstrate good attitudes to their learning. Their strong willingness to work things out for themselves is helping their good progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in your school. The systems overseen by the academy trust and careful monitoring by governors have ensured that safeguarding systems are effective. Regular training, alongside effective procedures, ensures that staff and governors have a good awareness of any risks to pupils' well-being and take prompt action to protect pupils, where necessary.

Discussions with pupils, staff and governors, as well as the results from surveys of parents, show that pupils feel safe in school and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are very knowledgeable about how to stay safe online. Pupils particularly value the school's online communication system, where they can share any concerns with staff in a safe environment.

Inspection findings

- We agreed that the first line of enquiry would be to evaluate the impact of leaders' actions to improve standards in mathematics across key stage 2. This was because pupils' achievement in mathematics in the key stage 2 national tests was low.
- Mathematics books in key stage 2 show pupils make strong progress across all areas. Three quarters of current Year 6 pupils are working at the expected standard or higher.
- Across the school, pupils use accurate terminology to talk about advanced mathematical concepts. Pupils explain their calculations with confidence and clarity. Their responses to teachers' feedback show they have developed strong skills in solving problems.
- My second line of enquiry explored the impact of leaders' actions in improving

achievement in writing, especially for boys. This was because boys' achievements in writing have been lower than girls' in many areas of school assessment.

- Teachers have used an approach which uses oral storytelling to lead into writing to develop boys' writing in lower key stage 2. Teachers have specifically chosen topics to inspire an interest in writing, such as Star Wars and Harry Potter. As a result, boys are writing in a wider range of styles with increasing complexity, reflecting the high expectations and challenge in teaching.
- Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively to ensure that boys are supported to make rapid improvements in their writing. Teaching assistants provide highly effective support for individual and small groups of boys. Consequently, any gaps between these pupils and their peers are closing.
- Leaders assess and track pupils' progress in writing rigorously. Leaders closely monitor the progress of all pupils working below teachers' expectations. This is having a positive impact on the progress of boys' writing across the school.
- Teachers do not use assessment well enough to identify gaps in pupils' understanding of spelling patterns and rules. This means that pupils repeat their mistakes and poor spelling is having a negative impact on the standard of their overall writing.
- My third line of enquiry explored how effectively teachers use assessment to develop pupils' independence. This was a focus area because your previous inspection report stated that the pupils needed to take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Teaching is successful in developing pupils' positive attitudes towards learning, particularly in science and mathematics. Work in books demonstrates that pupils think creatively. They debate in English and religious education with self-assurance and enquiring minds. Pupils report that they are encouraged to 'reach high' across all areas of the curriculum. They are well prepared for their next steps in education and are self-confident and resilient learners.
- My final line of enquiry was to evaluate the impact of leaders' actions to ensure that pupils' attendance is improved. I explored why the latest published attendance figures show that attendance and persistent absence was a weakness.
- During recent years, overall attendance and the regular attendance of many pupils have been below levels found nationally. You have introduced reward certificates and now include attendance information on the newsletter to parents. This recent work, in partnership with the education welfare officer, to instil a culture of high expectation around attendance, is beginning to show signs of impact. However, governors have not been effective in holding you to account for raising attendance across the school. You do not effectively analyse patterns of attendance for groups and therefore any dips in attendance are not quickly followed up. This means that the longer-term impact of the new attendance procedures is not yet clear.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching and assessment of spelling improves across the school so that pupils understand spelling patterns and rules and spell words correctly
- leaders and governors refine their monitoring to enable them to identify rapidly, and address, gaps in the attendance of groups.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the multi academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Truro, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cornwall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Costello
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and we talked about the improvements that had been made since the previous inspection. I also considered your self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I looked at safeguarding records and explored your recruitment and vetting procedures. I held a discussion with two school improvement leaders from the academy trust. I met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body. We carried out a learning walk in the school. Together, we looked at a sample of books from all classes. I had a discussion with a group of pupils to gather their views of the school and their learning. I considered the 30 responses submitted by parents through Parent View, the online inspection questionnaire.