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Mrs Laura Khine
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Khine

Short inspection of Boxted St Peter's Church of England School

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

You are determined that all pupils in the school succeed and achieve well. You place great emphasis on the need for consistently high-quality teaching and have developed a shared understanding with teachers about what the features of the best teaching are. Together, you work hard to continually improve what happens in classrooms to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress. As a result, teaching across the school demonstrates many strong features and continues to evolve.

You are proud of how the school's homework policy has developed since the school's previous Ofsted inspection in 2014. Pupils now select the type of homework which suits their learning style. This means that they enjoy completing it, and they do so to a high standard. Homework routinely underpins the good progress pupils make. Nearly 90% of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, stated that appropriate homework is set for their child.

Pupils value their time at school. The pupils I spoke with during the inspection said they liked many parts of their education, ranging from mathematics to art and from English to 'everything'. They commented positively on the fact that there are rewards every week. These pupils said that it is okay to be different in this school.

Pupils who responded to Ofsted's pupil survey confirmed this view, reflecting that the school encourages them to treat others with respect. Almost all pupils who responded to their survey would recommend the school to others.

The vast majority of parents would also recommend the school. All of those who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said their child feels safe in school. They all agreed that their child is well taught. In their written comments, parents reflected on the positive impact of staff on how children enjoy the school and make good progress. One parent highlighted how the school is flourishing under the 'watchful eye' of the headteacher with her 'super teaching team'.

Governors support you well in your work. Like you, they are keen to further improve the school. They take responsibility for ensuring that the work of leaders has a positive impact on the education of pupils. For example, as well as discussing improvements with you, they visit the school and speak with staff and pupils. They appreciate the culture of openness you have fostered and they have a good understanding of what works well and what does not. Governors effectively challenge school leaders and inform the school's improvement planning. They are effective in helping the school to succeed.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have clear and robust procedures for staff to report concerns about the well-being of pupils. When safeguarding matters arise, they are brought to the attention of leaders, centrally logged and accessible to appropriate staff. Because of the effective filing and systems you have in place, issues surrounding the welfare of pupils are not overlooked, even if they are apparently small. You take timely actions to support pupils who are at risk, and you are persistent in pursuing the help vulnerable pupils need from outside agencies. Your procedures, systems and vigilance keep pupils safe.

Pupils know who to speak to if they have a problem. They know to pass on concerns to teachers if they are worried about themselves or a friend. When bullying occurs, it is dealt with quickly. You teach pupils to keep themselves safe. Pupils I spoke with during the inspection spoke knowledgeably about 'safety week', and its coverage of topics such as e-safety, fire safety and water safety. They understand the fire evacuation procedures and value the 'worry box'. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, and they feel safe.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was about whether leaders are effectively identifying and overcoming the barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged pupils. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils has varied year-on-year. There has not been a consistent pattern in how well these pupils achieve. In 2017, disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well as other pupils nationally in either of key stage 1 or key stage 2.

- You have a precise understanding of the barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged pupils currently in the school. You identify the barriers to their learning at both a whole-school and an individual level. You track the progress of disadvantaged pupils carefully and you intervene when they fall behind. Teachers and teaching assistants use their accurate knowledge of each pupil to provide them with extra guidance and support. As a result, most disadvantaged pupils now make good progress across the school.
- My second line of enquiry related to the progress made by pupils who entered the school with broadly average prior attainment. In 2016 and 2017, these pupils did less well than other pupils at both key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Your approach to improving the progress of pupils with broadly average prior attainment is to ensure that all pupils are consistently well taught. Through a range of techniques, such as teachers coaching each other and teaching together, you have ensured that teachers learn from each other. You monitor the standard of teaching across the school and record its impact on the progress pupils make. As a result, teaching has improved and now supports all groups of pupils to make good progress.
- While teaching is effective in supporting pupils across the school, you recognise that there is still more to be done so that all teaching is as good as the best. You continue to develop and refine your systems for achieving this.
- My final line of enquiry related to how well pupils apply their mathematical knowledge and skills when investigating and solving problems. In your previous inspection in 2014, this was recommended as a next step in developing the school.
- You have placed a particular focus in mathematics on problem-solving and reasoning. This is evident in the work pupils produce. Pupils are confident in the use of mathematical ideas. Their understanding of mathematics develops over time. Pupils can successfully apply their skills to simple calculations and problems. Most pupils make broadly average progress in mathematics. You recognise that there is now a need to support pupils' deeper understanding of mathematics through the use of more complex problems so they can apply their skills more skilfully.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching in the school improves further by teachers:
 - setting problems in mathematics which challenge pupils to think deeply and apply their skills
 - learning from each other so that all teaching is as good as the best.

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

Yours sincerely

Andy Hemmings
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with you, other leaders and five governors. I met with pupils and visited lessons, sometimes accompanied by you.

I looked at performance information and reviewed a range of documentation relating to the school's self-evaluation, development planning, safeguarding arrangements, analysis of the spending of pupil premium funding and records of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

I considered the 40 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 15 responses to the pupil survey and 16 responses to the staff survey.