

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



25 January 2018

Mrs Helen Picton
Headteacher
Sir Robert Hitcham's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
College Road
Framlingham
Woodbridge
Suffolk
IP13 9EP

Dear Mrs Picton

Short inspection of Sir Robert Hitcham's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 January 2018, 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

The school is a vibrant and caring place, where everyone is treated as a unique individual. Displays in corridors and classrooms celebrate pupils' work and successes, including in a creative and engaging Nursery and Reception provision. Many pupils voluntarily take on leadership responsibilities available at the school. Pupils embrace the school's core ethos. This is because you, your staff and your governors tenaciously promote values such as equality, tolerance, humility and humanity in day-to-day school life. As a result, pupils are kind, caring and happy.

Pupils, parents, carers and staff are, in the main, very positive about the school. You have worked hard to develop parental communication, especially through your diligent parent council. This group particularly values how you seek the views of everyone when making changes in the school. This work ensures that the school remains a community for the pupils and parents alike.

A real strength of the school's provision is the rich, varied and well-thought-out wider curriculum. Your subject leaders use their specialist expertise to plan and support other teachers to provide good opportunities for children and pupils. This includes an extensive extra-curricular programme and a variety of high-quality trips and visits. Your insightful subject leaders routinely review assessment information

and pupils' work, so that they can identify quickly things that need ongoing development. This means that children from the early years through to pupils in Year 6 experience an ever-improving and high-quality wider curriculum. You have used this curriculum well in 2016/17 to give pupils more opportunities to develop writing skills and raise standards in writing for key stage 2 pupils.

Your development of the curriculum has also included a review of homework, which is increasingly focusing on challenging pupils to achieve more. While a small proportion of parents are less positive about this, the quality of the work being produced indicates that homework activities are starting to challenge pupils to apply their learning more thoroughly.

You and your knowledgeable and skilled governing body have acted appropriately to address a number of challenges and issues since the previous inspection, as well as the areas for improvement from the last inspection. You have identified that there is still further work to do to raise standards in key stage 2 mathematics, especially for the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. You also acknowledge that you need to do further work to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities get the correct external support and/or specialist provision rapidly enough.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders use the most up-to-date national and local guidance to train staff. Consequently, staff know their responsibilities and the signs to look out for. They make appropriate referrals to you, as the designated safeguarding leader. You use these referrals to seek the right advice and/or support from relevant external agencies. Although you record this information in pupils' case files, we did discuss minor ways that you could sharpen some of the recording of events even more effectively.

The school acts quickly to resolve any safeguarding concerns, including in its own procedures. The school continues to benefit from routine external review by the local authority as part of their normal half-termly visits.

Almost all pupils feel safe at the school. They talked to me about how their personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons and assemblies teach them about a range of different ways to keep safe. Children in the early years could talk to me about road safety, while older pupils spoke about ways that they keep themselves safe while online. You assess the risks of the school site and the different activities that pupils undertake, both on-site and off-site. Your staff are vigilant while supervising during breaktimes and lunchtimes.

Inspection findings

- In carrying out the inspection, I focused on a number of lines of enquiry. The first of these involved reviewing the provision for mathematics in key stage 2. This is because, although Year 6 pupils attained well in 2016/17, they made less

progress than pupils nationally. This was particularly, but not exclusively, the case for the most able pupils, including those who were from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- You and governors have begun to steadily address the issues in mathematics in key stage 2. Additional leadership capacity in the subject is starting to make a real difference to the planning, guidance and training of staff. You have sought greater consistency in assessment through your work with other local high-performing schools. The team has also reviewed pupils' examination papers from last year. In response to your findings, staff training is now focused on reasoning and applying mathematical skills to broader, more complex questions.
- We identified that, although there are improvements in the teaching of mathematics in key stage 2, staff are not yet identifying quickly enough when pupils understand a topic and need a greater level of challenge. On occasions, the most able pupils are still undertaking work that is too easy for them.
- My second line of enquiry was to review the provision for disadvantaged pupils. Although there are very few such pupils in each year group, they make up around one sixth of the school population in its entirety. The numbers in each year group can vary quite considerably, and published data does not give a clear picture of the progress that these pupils make as they move through the school.
- The provision for disadvantaged pupils who need to catch up or who have additional complex needs is a real strength in the school's provision. You have allocated funding towards providing good-quality intervention, nurture and pre-learning support. This is supporting a variety of pupils' academic, social and emotional needs. Governors have a good understanding of this work and its impact. However, the funding for disadvantaged pupils is not yet being allocated specifically enough to secure rapid improvement for the most able disadvantaged pupils, in particular their progress in mathematics at key stage 2.
- My third line of enquiry was to review the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This is because published information for this very small group of pupils, and the school's information report on the website, did not give a clear picture about the provision for these pupils over time.
- You have worked very effectively to use the most recent published guidance to identify pupils' needs correctly. As a result, you have a small but carefully supported group of pupils who have identified SEN and/or disabilities. You and your team are an inclusive school which does not give up on any child or pupil, often working with pupils very well to meet a variety of complex needs.
- These pupils' needs are also well met in classrooms, both by teachers and teaching assistants. This is because your staff know pupils well and develop effective strategies to help them learn. Any additional out-of-class or one-to-one provision is well thought out, carefully allocated and closely reviewed by your SEN leader. In particular, the provision for pupils with complex health needs that impact on their learning is very well thought out.
- We identified that, on occasion, leaders do not consider the potential application for securing further external support quickly enough, in particular for pupils who exhibit a complexity of need but who do not have any specific health needs.

- The final line of enquiry was focused on the progress that you had made in the areas identified in the previous inspection, most notably improving how teachers are held to account over their performance.
- Your focused appraisal targets for teachers are helping raise the quality of teaching and subject leadership. In particular, this has resulted in very high-quality leadership of assessment, physical education, science, music and PSHE. Staff are not only held accountable but are also empowered to take ownership of their own professional development.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- raise standards in key stage 2 mathematics, especially for the most able, including those who are disadvantaged
- make more precise use of the additional funding to support the most able disadvantaged pupils to attain the highest standards by the end of key stage 2
- ensure that pupils with the most complex cognitive and developmental needs receive early enough support in their application for external services, such as education, health and care plans and/or specialist provision.

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

Yours sincerely

Kim Pigram
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with you, senior leaders and subject leaders, as well as members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of governors. I also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. You and I visited Nursery and Reception classes, and some classes in key stages 1 and 2. We looked at pupils' work while we were in some of those lessons. I spoke with pupils throughout the day and met with a small group of pupils formally. I took account of the Ofsted online questionnaire responses from 64 parents, as well as 40 staff responses and 66 pupil responses to Ofsted surveys. I reviewed a range of school documentation, including information related to safeguarding and pupils' progress.