

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Karen Walker  
Headteacher  
St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Laverstock  
16 Church Road  
Laverstock  
Salisbury  
Wiltshire  
SP1 1QX

Dear Mrs Walker

### **Short inspection of St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Laverstock**

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 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 May 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

You are highly regarded by staff, parents and children. Parents' views are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Significant changes to the staff team last year mean that there are now several new members of staff, including new subject leaders. This emerging group of leaders are driven and ambitious for the school and for what pupils can achieve. The staff team are solidly behind you and morale is high.

Following some disappointing outcomes for pupils, you recognised that improvements were needed. You put in place extra professional development for staff to help to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. To help pupils to understand how to become more effective learners, you introduced 'bubbling learners', and reminders of this theme can be seen around the school and in classes. Pupils are encouraged to be inquisitive, to ask questions and to get involved with their learning.

In mathematics, which has been the improvement focus this year, pupils are involved in their learning and have to think hard for themselves to work out mathematical problems. This helps them to develop their understanding, and progress in most year groups is improving for many pupils.

At the previous inspection, there was a recommendation to improve the quality of writing further by ensuring that pupils can practise their skills. Pupils' books show that pupils have an improving range of spelling, handwriting and grammar skills. Pupils have an increasing knowledge of different types of writing and can tell stories and poems from those they have learned. However, writing remains an area for improvement for the school. Leaders are determined to ensure that expectations are consistently high, particularly for the most able pupils. Pupils do not consistently apply and develop their skills, as writing in a range of subjects is sometimes too limited.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of keeping pupils safe. Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that staff receive regular training and updates. Recruitment processes are secure and thorough. Safeguarding issues are continually revisited and explored, both in staff and governor meetings. Governors visit the school often and make checks to ensure that safeguarding procedures are effective.

Pupils are encouraged to report any bullying issues and these are dealt with firmly. Parents describe how secure and happy their children are at school due to the high level of care provided by staff. 'Staff go the extra mile here to make sure that children are well looked after' was a typical comment made by parents.

### **Inspection findings**

- We looked at some particular areas in more depth. We explored how successful subject leaders are in tackling the lower progress seen for some groups of pupils in writing and reading. New leaders have set about ensuring that the progress of pupils is now checked more closely throughout the year. They check pupils' books, examine information about pupils' progress and talk to teachers about how to make further improvements to teaching and learning. Although much of this work is recent, standards are rising across much of the school. Leaders are aware that progress in writing, particularly for the most able pupils, can improve further.
- Following a dip in outcomes in early years, many changes have taken place to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The new leader for early years creates interesting learning activities for children, both inside and outside. Examples of what children can do and understand are collected and used to plan the next steps in learning. However, there are currently too few examples of writing to show good progress for children.
- Following changes to the national curriculum and assessment, progress in reading, particularly for boys, has dipped. The subject leader for reading has researched improvements to the teaching of reading and staff are currently exploring new approaches. The aim is to improve pupils' understanding of what they are reading. Some teaching of reading now involves pupils more in discussion and in understanding the books that they read.

- Pupils are introduced to authors who make visits to the school. This makes reading interesting for pupils. Pupils are aware of the expectation to read often. They are less clear about what they need to do to improve their reading skills. Boys expressed that they would appreciate a wider range of books to be available so that they are able to read more widely and explore different authors and styles.
- We looked at how well disadvantaged pupils are supported to make good progress. You are ambitious for all pupils and ensure that the extra funding that the school has to support disadvantaged pupils is used well to provide extra help for pupils. A more rigorous approach to checking pupils' progress and to holding teachers to account is being introduced this year. As a result, the small number of disadvantaged pupils are showing signs of starting to catch up with their peers in most classes.
- We also looked at how well the school improvement plan supports the improvements being made. You demonstrate an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses that exist in the school and a steely determination to make the improvements needed.
- Governors also know the school well and visit often. The improvement plan sets out the actions to make improvements in pupils' progress. We agreed that more detail about the expected outcomes for pupils throughout the year would help governors to check the differences being made to pupils' progress. This would support governors in their important role of providing challenge to leaders for the progress that pupils make.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the recent, more rigorous checks being made to improve pupils' achievement are embedded and are effective in raising standards for pupils across the school
- the improvement plan includes clear milestones which enable leaders to check how well standards are improving
- pupils, particularly boys, are supported to improve their reading skills and to read more widely
- pupils, particularly the most able, develop their writing skills effectively by using them in a range of subjects
- expectations in writing are consistently high across the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Tonwen Empson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, visits were made with you to see learning across the school. Together, we looked at a range of pupils' workbooks. I met with subject leaders. I spoke to staff and pupils informally. I met with a group of pupils to discuss their reading. I spoke on the telephone to a representative from the local authority who oversees school improvement. I had a meeting with several governors, including the chair of the governing body.

I scrutinised key school documents, including those to do with safeguarding, the school improvement plan and the school's self-evaluation document. I looked at recruitment procedures, including the single central record.

I took into account the views gathered from parents at the start of the day, a letter received from a parent and the 83 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also took account of the 15 responses from staff to an online staff survey.