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Mrs Anna Sutherland
Headteacher
St Anne's Infant School
Bloomfield Road
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Dear Mrs Sutherland

Short inspection of St Anne's Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 20 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 January 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.**

New to the headship of the school in September 2017, you have brought a freshness of approach which both staff and parents appreciate. You and your governors have an accurate understanding of the effectiveness of the school. Although you acknowledge that some progress has been made in addressing the key areas for development identified at the time of the previous inspection, you know there is still a way to go. There has been some improvement in the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. However, you and your teaching staff are working hard to improve this further.

Teachers' expectations of pupils, particularly the most able and those who are disadvantaged, are improving. Nevertheless, increasing the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who make the expected progress is a school priority. Teachers are developing higher expectations for the most able in English and mathematics. Working closely with your newly appointed deputy headteachers, you are systematically reviewing and amending the quality of provision to ensure that all pupils are fully stretched and challenged. By ensuring that any changes made are planned carefully and discussed thoroughly, staff are fully 'on-board' with all initiatives.

St Anne's ethos and values for all pupils to 'reach for the stars and shine' is firmly

embedded and reflected in the day-to-day life of the school. It is a happy school where staff, governors and families work in harmony together. Parents who responded to the online inspection questionnaire are overwhelmingly delighted with all aspects of school life. As one parent explained, 'every single child is catered for... they are special from the moment they arrive. I couldn't ask for more than what they do'.

Safeguarding is effective.

The vast majority of pupils I spoke to during the inspection, and those who responded to the online inspection questionnaire, reported that they felt safe in school. They were unanimous in confirming that if they had a worry or problem there was always someone they can go to for help or advice. Pupils have a very clear understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet, both at home and in school. They talk confidently about how they use their well-practiced fire drill procedures when the alarm unexpectedly goes off.

Both staff and governors receive safeguarding training and pay close attention to the regular updates from the headteacher. This ensures that they are clear about their responsibilities. Rigorous checks are carried out on any potential employees and robust induction procedures ensure that the safety of the pupils is never compromised when appointing new staff.

The family support and learning mentor plays a key role in making sure that vulnerable pupils and their families are well supported. Working alongside them, and sensitively signposting parents to the relevant external agencies, she enables them to receive the specialist help they need.

All parents who responded to the online inspection questionnaire reported that they were confident that their children felt safe in school. Their views can be summed up by one who explained that 'the staff are very tuned into the children's emotional needs and well-being, with great emphasis put on making the children feel safe and comfortable in being able to speak out if they have problems or worries'.

Inspection findings

- Current Year 1 pupils are demonstrating that the majority are meeting the expected standard in phonics for their age. You accurately attribute this to a more consistent approach to the teaching of phonics and regular assessing of what pupils have learned. Adopting a more flexible approach to the deployment of learning support assistants is also ensuring that individual pupils are provided with specific help, as and when they need it. After a set period of time their progress is evaluated and the level of support required is reassessed to ensure it is meeting individual needs.
- Organising workshops for parents and providing resources and top tips for them has raised successfully their level of engagement and understanding of their children's learning of phonic skills.
- You and your teaching staff are steadily accelerating the progress of your most

able pupils. Recent staff training has helped them to have a better awareness of how to ask questions which challenge the most able pupils to think deeper and rationalise problems. The introduction of a new programme to support the teaching of mathematics is having a positive impact on the progress of the most able mathematicians. Current pupils' mathematics books show that when the pupils are asked to 'stretch their thinking', it stimulates and engages them in extending their knowledge.

- A focus on fluency and expression, an emphasis on reading for pleasure and access to a new and vibrant library is helping the most able readers to broaden their skills. Nevertheless, you agree with me that although the current most able pupils are making much better progress in English and mathematics, there are limited opportunities for them to extend and develop their skills across other areas of the curriculum.
- There is a renewed focus on improving the progress that disadvantaged pupils make. Greater teacher accountability with clearer tracking systems, regular reviews and meetings with parents are all helping to accelerate the pupils' progress. Meeting with other local schools to share the most effective ways of supporting disadvantaged pupils is raising further your teachers' awareness of specific challenges they may encounter.
- You and other school leaders are fully aware that the proportion of children who reach a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has been declining over several years. You acknowledge that children in Nursery and Reception have not always made the progress they are capable of. This is as a result of staff changes and shortcomings in provision. This has included a lack of investment in resources and inconsistencies in the way that children's achievements have been assessed in the past. Periods of time without an early years leader have also contributed to the decline in the quality of provision.
- You and your early years teaching staff are swiftly making positive changes to this provision. There is now a greater focus on making sure that children gain a firm foundation from which they can develop their reading, writing and mathematical knowledge and understanding. Activities are now planned to ensure that all children have opportunities to acquire the basic skills which will support them develop their learning. This includes managing their feelings, promoting communication and language and developing their physical skills, all of which will support children in their learning. You are also aware that both the indoor and outdoor learning areas need improving so that they can be used to support progress more effectively.
- Current children in Nursery and Reception are making better progress. However, given that there are new staff members, including a new structure to the leadership of early years, who are awaiting the arrival of much needed equipment to enhance the learning for your youngest children, you recognise that that there is still a way to go.
- In the past, there has been an above-average proportion of fixed-term exclusions. A clearer approach to behaviour management, coupled with specialist provision and support for those pupils who are unsettled from time to time, is having a positive impact on how pupils respond to sanctions and rewards.

Consequently, the number of fixed term exclusions is declining.

- You are justifiably proud of the improvements to behaviour that tracking systems show. Together, we observed pupils in class fully involved in their learning and behaving well. Nevertheless, we agreed that behaviour during unstructured sessions, such as in the halls at lunchtimes, needs to improve. For example, some pupils were observed shouting at each other. Others were unable to line up sensibly for their lunch or sit down long enough to eat it.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- most-able pupils are fully challenged to extend and develop their English and mathematics skills across all areas of the curriculum
- they carefully evaluate the effectiveness of the recently introduced initiatives to the Nursery and Reception provision and develop the role of the early years leader
- the plans which have already been devised to improve pupils' behaviour during unstructured sessions are swiftly put into place.

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

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteachers to discuss the school's effectiveness. I held discussions with five governors, including the chair of the governing body. I held a telephone discussion with your school improvement officer. Together, we observed four phonics lessons, two in Reception and two in Year 1. We also visited the Nursery class and three Year 2 classes. I looked at a sample of Year 2 books with you and your two deputy headteachers. I also looked at some examples of work produced by pupils in Year 1 who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. I examined documents, including information about the safeguarding of children, and the progress that they make in their learning. I also looked at the school's self-evaluation document and improvement plan. I considered 94 responses and free-text comments submitted to the inspection questionnaire, Parent View. I also considered the online responses from 22 members of staff and 65 pupils.

