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20 April 2018

Mrs Rachel Dare
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dare

Short inspection of Aylburton Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 October 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment and the establishment of the Severn Federation with another local school, you have set out a strong commitment to the pursuit of excellence. You and your leaders have a clear vision for Aylburton Primary School. You are determined that all pupils receive the best possible education and their welfare is at the heart of all you do. Strong team work across the federation has enabled you to share expertise and high-quality training to develop staff skills further. As a consequence, pupils achieve well across subjects as they move through the school.

You encourage pupils to be successful and enjoy their learning. While you have high expectations of pupils' academic achievement, you do not lose sight of developing important life skills such as courage and resilience. Your rich and varied curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of enrichment activities and extra-curricular clubs. Parents comment that teachers inspire an interest in learning. Most pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, take part in at least one of the numerous clubs on offer, such as archery and the 'young voices' choir. These help to broaden their experiences and skills extremely well, preparing them effectively for the next stage in their education.

You have created a culture, shared by your staff, to continually look for ways to improve the quality of education within the school. You tackled successfully the recommendation from the previous report to make better use of teaching assistants

by ensuring that they are well trained in supporting learning. You place a strong emphasis on improving the outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities so they make faster progress. Staff work together effectively to ensure that the needs of these pupils are well met through a carefully tailored programme of help and support.

You are aware that while standards are high in key stage 1, pupils have not achieved as highly at the end of key stage 2 in previous years. To this end, you make sure that adults consistently challenge most-able pupils to achieve well. You have introduced new approaches to teaching writing and mathematics to meet the higher demands of the national curriculum. As a result of focused, daily teaching, more key stage 2 pupils are on track to achieve the higher standards for their age than previously. However, you acknowledge that there is more to do to completely embed these approaches to make certain the skills and thinking of the most able pupils are stretched to the full.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your governors place a high priority on keeping pupils safe. You have created a culture of vigilance within the school, making sure that arrangements are fit for purpose. The governor responsible for safeguarding checks that policy guidelines are followed and reviewed on a regular basis to improve their effectiveness. She also verifies, at frequent intervals, that the school's single central record is maintained accurately. Procedures for recruiting staff follow the statutory guidance stringently. Staff and governors are appropriately trained in identifying possible signs of risk and harm, and how to keep pupils safe from extremism and radicalisation. Staff are extremely vigilant in reporting any concerns about pupils. All risks are thoroughly assessed by leaders and updated regularly, for example with regard to fire safety and educational visits.

You know the families of children who attend Aylburton Primary very well and keep a close eye on their welfare, especially those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. You work closely with other agencies to ensure that pupils receive the care and support they need. Most pupils attend regularly and are seldom late for school. However, you are quick to take decisive action should attendance give cause for concern. Parents appreciate the lengths to which you go to provide an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere where every child is valued and cherished. They value the warmth and openness of staff and the provision of a 'listening post' where concerns can be aired confidentially. Pupils confirm that they feel safe in school because of the good care given by staff and the robust security measures around the school site.

Pupils are prepared well to manage any potential risks to their safety. They have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and how to combat this, although pupils say it does not happen often. They are knowledgeable about staying safe online, knowing never to give out personal information to strangers.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I met with you to discuss the school's progress since the previous inspection. We agreed the following lines of enquiry: how successfully leaders make provision to meet the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities; how effectively the most able pupils are challenged in writing and mathematics in key stage 2; and how well the school keeps pupils safe.
- You have implemented effective systems to fully meet the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including those who are disadvantaged. Your commendable work with other agencies and educational specialists ensures that pupils' needs are precisely identified and support plans are tightly focused. Parents are involved throughout this process and make regular contributions to their children's individual plans. You monitor closely the impact of your work to enable pupils to make the best possible progress and catch up with their classmates. Your staff are skilled in giving the right levels of support and challenge so that pupils are increasingly successful in their learning and integrated fully into school life.
- While the most able pupils achieved the expected standards in key stage 2 in previous years, few exceeded them in mathematics and writing. As a consequence, you introduced a variety of new strategies to improve pupils' skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar. You also introduced high-quality texts to inspire pupils' writing and enrich the vocabulary they use.
- During my visit, we looked at a range of written work by most-able pupils. We agreed that, since the start of the year, they write with greater length with increasingly accurate spelling, imaginative word choices and a greater command of sentence construction. In their writing task about the dragon, based on the story of 'Beowulf', Year 6 pupils demonstrated their ability to write remarkable descriptions using exciting vocabulary. However, you acknowledge that pupils do not consistently demonstrate mastery across a range of styles which is needed to achieve a high standard.
- Following extensive staff training with the introduction of the new mathematics scheme, teachers are better able to plan to develop pupils' fluency in calculation and reasoning skills.
- The most able pupils enjoy the challenges where they have to apply their knowledge to solve 'tricky' problems. The work in their books shows this approach is having a positive impact on deepening their understanding of mathematical concepts. Increasingly, teachers present pupils with tasks that require them to think deeply to solve complex problems, although their ability to explain their reasoning and their methods is not yet fully developed.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils continue to extend their writing skills across a range of styles, to enable them to achieve the highest possible standards

- teachers continue to develop pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics by requiring pupils to explain their methods and thinking more extensively.

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

Yours sincerely

Sandra Woodman
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your leadership team and discussed the school's self-evaluation, information about pupils' progress and improvements since the previous inspection. Together, we observed learning in classrooms and looked at a range of pupils' work in books. I listened to several pupils from key stages 1 and 2 read and met with pupils to talk about their experience of school life. I held meetings with middle leaders and with five governors. In addition, I spoke with an external adviser who supports the school. I looked at a range of written evidence, including documents relating to safeguarding and attendance information. I took account of the written comments of eight parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and those who spoke with me at the start of school. I also took account of the views of 12 members of staff who returned the online questionnaires.