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Mrs Elizabeth Burton
Headteacher
St Mary and John Church of England Primary School
Meadow Lane
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Dear Mrs Burton

Short inspection of St Mary and John Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 March 2018 with Ofsted Inspector Peter Dunmall, 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.

Staff are proud to work at the school and the vast majority of parents and carers responding to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, are happy with the quality of education provided. Parents are also very positive in their written comments about the school. Typical examples of these comments are 'My children have been taught by teachers who have inspired them in every area' and 'The opportunities for enrichment are outstanding and the progress my children have made is really pleasing.'

You have a clear vision and ambition for the school. You focus on ensuring that pupils achieve well and develop their personal skills in a safe environment. Staff share your vision and are working hard to achieve it. As a consequence, pupils are happy, enjoy their learning and feel safe and well cared for.

You and your leadership team have focused effectively on the areas for improvement identified in the previous report. Physical education is taught well and pupils access a wide range of opportunities. These include regular swimming for all year groups from Year 2 onwards, and many outdoor physical activities. You ensure that leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning closely and you provide targeted professional development so that standards continue to improve. You have developed a new curriculum which enables pupils to learn through stories. Pupils have been inspired by this imaginative approach to literature and the school's

curriculum has been enriched.

Since the previous inspection, pupils in key stages 1 and 2 have been brought together on one site. Reception children, although on the school's roll, continue to be taught in an early years provision one mile from the school's main site. This provision, Comper Foundation Stage School, is inspected separately. It is not managed by the school's governing body. However, lessons in this early years provision were observed during this inspection. You have strong links with this school's leaders and governors. Communication is regular, and your inclusion leader has a good knowledge of the children who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. However, communication about Reception children at this setting needs to be further developed so that you and your leadership team can monitor more effectively the attainment and progress of all children in Reception.

Children's achievement in the early years has increased well over the past three years. The proportion achieving a good level of development now exceeds the national average. Pupils do well in key stage 1. The results at the end of Year 2 in 2017, at both the expected standard and greater depth for reading, writing and mathematics, were above those of pupils nationally. At the end of key stage 2 in 2017, pupils attained above the national averages in reading and writing. Attainment in mathematics was in line with the national average at the expected standard but below at the higher standard.

The average rate of progress from the end of key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2 has been falling. This was particularly marked for pupils at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 and 2017. You and your leadership team had not, until recently, monitored this progress measure. Progress in mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2017 was in the bottom 10% of schools nationally. Consequently, you have made mathematics a key focus for development in key stage 2. The recent changes to mathematics teaching and learning are having a very positive impact on current pupils' progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team and governors ensure that all the arrangements to safeguard pupils are effective and fit for purpose. The importance that you and governors give to keeping every pupil safe has generated a strong culture of safeguarding. This is evident in the vigilance and actions of your staff.

Thorough recruitment checks are carried out to check the suitability of all adults who work with pupils, and these are recorded carefully. You make sure that staff have appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding training and know how to recognise the different signs of abuse, including neglect. All staff know what they must do if they have a concern about a pupil.

The careful recording of concerns means that you access help for pupils and their families at an early stage. You support them through effective work with other teams and agencies. You also work with families and teams to improve pupils' attendance.

Pupils report that bullying, if it happens, is handled well. They are confident that any incident brought to the attention of a member of staff would be dealt with effectively.

You ensure that pupils learn about their safety and risks to their well-being through the curriculum. You give particular importance to pupils' learning about how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Pupils know the importance of keeping their personal details safe.

Leaders at the Comper Foundation Stage School, in liaison with you, ensure that all children are safe and that safeguarding arrangements are effective and fit for purpose.

Inspection findings

- Senior leaders who oversee the curriculum are passionate and inspirational about teaching and learning across all subjects. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities that staff arrange to visit local sites, for example the adjoining nature reserve and the many museums in Oxford. This helps to enrich and embed a very broad and balanced curriculum.
- Leaders and staff know pupils' learning needs well, including pupils who are disadvantaged, those who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. The school team provides good support and interventions to help most pupils achieve successfully. Teachers keep detailed records of pupils' levels of attainment and set challenging targets for individuals. However, leaders do not track the progress of pupils from their starting points at the end of the previous key stage. This restricts leaders' ability to fully evaluate the impact of their actions to accelerate pupils' progress. Nevertheless, the evidence seen in books and pupils' individual assessment information clearly show that most pupils are currently making strong progress.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and focus on their learning. They are confident and articulate about their work. Leaders have brought in many strategies and resources to engage pupils effectively during the less-structured breaktimes. Leaders have also improved their approach to dealing with incidents of unkindness and the small number of bullying incidents. Pupils appreciate this, valuing the opportunity to discuss these situations. These initiatives have resulted in a decline in the number of behavioural incidents reported at breaktimes.
- Leaders at Comper Foundation Stage School monitor the quality of provision in the Reception Year and share their findings with you at regular meetings. Children in Reception classes behave well and enjoy the attractive and inviting learning environments, both inside and outside. Links with your school ensure that there is continuity of provision, for example in the teaching of phonics. However, you and your leadership team do not know enough about children's progress in this setting.
- Following the move of key stage 1 out of the building next to Comper Foundation Stage School, the leaders of this provision have seen a reduction in the

opportunities to prepare Reception children for Year 1. You have rightly identified transition as an area for further development and have plans in place to increase transition activities and visits.

- Leaders have identified the need to increase the rate of progress across key stage 2 in mathematics. The leadership team carried out research to develop a clear structure and approach for mathematics teaching and learning to improve the school's provision. Staff are making good use of regular training to implement this model, which is now in place across most of key stage 2. As a result, there is now clear evidence of sustained and rapid progress in key stage 2 mathematics for all groups of pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and pupils from minority ethnic groups.
- Attendance was below the national average in 2016 and 2017, and has been low for specific groups of pupils over time. You acknowledge this and have ensured that strategies are in place to improve attendance. You are working directly with pupils and their families to raise awareness of the importance of good attendance. As a result of the actions you have taken, the attendance of all groups of pupils has risen. Overall attendance is currently above the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the analysis and evaluation of pupils' progress information are strengthened
- links and communication with Comper Foundation Stage School are strengthened so that senior leaders have a thorough understanding of the learning and development needs of all children on roll.

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

Yours sincerely

Marcia Goodwin
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with you, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I also met with leaders and governors at the Comper Foundation Stage School. We met with a group of pupils from Years 1 to 6 and spoke with many other pupils

informally. Together, inspectors and senior leaders jointly observed learning across the school. We looked at examples of pupils' work and spoke with pupils during lessons. I scrutinised a variety of documents, including the school's own evaluation of its performance and the record of checks that leaders have made on the suitability of staff to work with pupils. I took account of 55 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including parents' free-text comments.