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25 April 2018

Mr Robin Smith
Executive Headteacher
St Kenelm's Church of England (VC) School
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Dear Mr Smith

Short inspection of St Kenelm's Church of England (VC) 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.

This school continues to be good.

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since restructuring the senior leadership team, after joining St Kenelm's in September 2017, you are ably supported by two assistant headteachers. While these colleagues lead the school day-to-day, parents, carers, staff and governors value your highly visible approach and ready availability to them. Your senior leadership team includes empowered, experienced staff, capable of taking on additional responsibilities under your skilful guidance.

Helpfully, the governing body is made up of experienced individuals who use their knowledge well when undertaking the areas of responsibility they have each been allocated. In meetings, they often challenge leaders about pupils' progress as well as support you in moving the school forward, especially regarding communication with parents. All governors have had appropriate training for their role and are well informed. They are extremely pleased with the way you are leading the school and are very supportive of the appropriate and measured changes that you have implemented in the relatively short time that you have been in post. Nevertheless, governors have not ensured that all of the required information is published on the school's website.

Staff are proud to be members of the school. They all agree that the school is well led and that you and the assistant headteachers support them effectively with their

work. Staff feel that you do all that you can to ensure that the school has a motivated, respected and effective team and they all enjoy working at the school. Parents also believe that the school is well managed and that staff make sure that pupils are happy. All parents responding to Parent View confirmed that they would recommend this school. One parent commented, 'I cannot say enough good things about the staff'. Another wrote, 'My son comes home every day wanting to share what he's done with great enthusiasm.'

You, and other leaders, have taken effective action to address the issues identified for improvement at the school's last inspection. The early years provision has been developed very effectively, with helpful arrangements made with the nursery to aid children's transition into school. You have deployed staff well to support pupils of different abilities in their mixed-age classes.

Teaching is consistently effective, including the small-group interventions ably led by teaching assistants. Strong relationships between staff and pupils, and high levels of challenge, ensure that the most able pupils achieve particularly well in national tests. Middle leaders have improved their skills overall; however, you acknowledge that leaders do not yet keep a careful enough check on the progress pupils make following any additional teaching or support.

The behaviour of pupils is exceptional. This is partly due to all staff sharing and promoting the Christian values that permeate the school. This includes a strong sense of mutual respect between pupils and staff. Pupils say that they like the teachers as they give them a good education. They also appreciate the school's approach to promoting equality between girls and boys, for example in the management of the football area and the school's uniform. Pupils' positive attitude towards the school is shown by their high rates of attendance.

Safeguarding is effective.

Sensibly, the safeguarding leadership arrangements you introduced in September 2017 ensure that there is sufficient cover in school at all times. Leaders make sure that staff have regular training to keep their knowledge up to date. Important safeguarding documents have been read and understood by all staff and governors. You recognise the need to regularly check that staff are fully aware of their responsibilities in keeping children safe. Helpfully, safeguarding resources are kept centrally in school and are available to all staff as required.

You ensure that staff and governors keep their knowledge up to date through regular agenda items during meetings. Governors fully appreciate their safeguarding role and the designated governor has a very clear understanding of what she needs to do in order to support staff to safeguard pupils. For example, she regularly meets with staff to discuss safeguarding needs and checks that safeguarding arrangements are thorough.

Pupils are supervised well at all times while on site. Pupils report that they feel safe at school and that they know who to talk with if they are concerned about anything.

All parents and staff who completed the online survey agreed that pupils are well looked after.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, as well as evaluating safeguarding arrangements, I focused on specific aspects of the school's provision, including: how well leaders provide information for parents and others; how well leaders use information about pupils' progress to steer their school improvement work; how well key stage 1 pupils achieve in mathematics and phonics; and how well middle-ability pupils are achieving in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have recognised the need to update some of the school's policies and to ensure that these are posted reliably on the school's website. This is work in progress. Current omissions include information about the school's curriculum, due to a review which staff are currently undertaking. In the meantime, weekly newsletters do give parents outline information about current classroom topics.
- Termly parents' evenings are very well attended and the vast majority of parents say that they receive valuable information about their child's progress. The value you place on parents' views, and their involvement, is shown through your engagement of parents in the school's consultation on its principles, and in your commitment to include parents in more school events such as religious services.
- Senior leaders feel that under your leadership they are empowered to have a greater impact on driving forward areas for improvement. They said that they have made 'huge progress' in their understanding of how well pupils are learning over time. This is shown by the detailed tracking of pupils' general attainment that is in place.
- Leaders are able to correctly identify which pupils require additional support due to teachers' comprehensive knowledge of individual pupils' needs. However, leaders do not reliably track the progress pupils make as a result of receiving additional support, for example with their speech and language. This means they are currently unable to use this information to help them systematically implement future support.
- In 2017, leaders correctly identified key stage 1 mathematics attainment as a key priority for improvement and have put in place highly effective strategies to address this. The resulting high-quality teaching and focused support are enabling current pupils to achieve well in mathematics.
- Leaders are taking effective action to address the decline shown over the last three years in Year 1 pupils' phonics attainment. Effective staff training and helpful additional support for pupils are supporting successful improvements to teaching and learning.
- In 2017, not all middle-ability pupils in Years 2 and 6 attained as well as expected in the end of key stage tests. Staff and leaders correctly identified this as an area for improvement and are taking effective action. This year, individual pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are receiving helpful bespoke phonics support to strengthen their reading and writing. Good-quality teaching of writing is also supporting pupils' good progress more widely. Pupils apply themselves well in class and are

extremely focused, allowing them to make the most of their learning time and improve their literacy and mathematics skills. As a result, current pupils are making good progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they evaluate the impact of additional interventions reliably, and use this analysis effectively to inform decisions about future support for pupils
- the school meets all statutory requirements for the publication of information and policies on its website.

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

Stuart Cateridge
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and your assistant headteachers, and separately with a group of governors, including the chair of governors. I visited all four classes, accompanied by you, to observe learning and look at pupils' work. I met with four pupils, one from each class. I took account of the nine responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 38 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also analysed a range of the school documents, including minutes from meetings, leaders' analysis of pupil progress data, and safeguarding policies and procedures. I held a telephone conversation with the school's local authority adviser.