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Mrs Jan Thomson
Headteacher
Kingshill Church School
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Dear Mrs Thomson

Short inspection of Kingshill Church School

Following my visit to the school on 11 April 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 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Following the last inspection, you were asked to extend pupils' vocabulary in writing and improve problem-solving skills in mathematics. You have addressed these recommendations successfully.

You have high aspirations for your pupils and staff and believe that everyone has the chance to succeed. You are a positive role model and your relentless and successful pursuit of improvement embodies the school's ethos of 'learning without limits'. Your commitment and enthusiasm motivate staff successfully to raise standards of teaching. Staff say that you and other leaders support them well. Consequently, they feel valued and proud to be a part of the school.

Highly effective teaching results in consistently strong outcomes at the end of key stage 2. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was significantly above average last year. Progress in reading and writing has been in the top 20% of schools nationally for the past two years. Effective teaching in the early years leads to good progress and most children achieve well. However, achievement at the end of key stage 1 is not consistently strong and few pupils attain higher standards. Achievement in the Year 1 phonics screening check also declined slightly last year. The adverse impact on outcomes is partially linked to a minority of pupils who have specific needs. You have put in place additional academic and emotional support for these pupils and, as a result of stronger teaching, most current pupils are making

steady progress in all subjects. You are aware it will be important to sustain this progress, so that more pupils achieve the expected and higher standards at the end of the key stage.

Adults develop very positive relationships with pupils. They set consistently high expectations and supervise pupils well at all times. As a result, pupils come into school calmly and sensibly, eager to start the day. During lessons, pupils listen respectfully to adults and settle down to work with the minimum of fuss. At breaktime, they play happily and sociably with their friends.

Pupils enjoy school and are extremely welcoming and polite. They are keen to chat and are clearly very proud of their school. Pupils find lessons interesting and challenging. This motivates them to concentrate on their learning, because they are determined to succeed.

Governors have a good understanding of the school's priorities because you provide them with a wealth of information which helps them to evaluate the school's effectiveness. They are dedicated to taking an active role in school improvement. They ask searching questions and undertake a range of monitoring activities to establish how effectively you are improving outcomes for pupils.

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are pleased with the school. They speak favourably about your effective leadership, the kind and caring ethos of the school and the approachability of all adults. Typical comments include, 'there is an amazing atmosphere here' and 'teachers are great'.

Safeguarding is effective.

You take time to get to know your pupils and their families well. You quickly identify when pupils are experiencing problems and seek advice from the multi-academy trust's safeguarding leader and outside agencies when necessary. This helps you to make sure that pupils get the specific help they need. You provide regular updates to training for all staff and they can explain what to do if they have concerns about pupils. You keep records of all referrals, which help you to identify when to take further action and follow up concerns.

You undertake thorough checks to ensure that all adults working in the school are safe to work with children. You record this information on the school's single central record. Several staff have undertaken first aid training and you obtain written consent from parents if you need to administer medication. This ensures that staff are suitably equipped to support pupils' medical needs. All staff undertake thorough risk assessments to ensure that pupils are kept safe on school trips. You routinely carry out evacuation and lockdown drills which make sure that everyone knows how to respond in the event of an emergency.

You have taken decisive action to engage with parents and support pupils to help them understand the importance of regular attendance. This is having a positive impact and attendance has improved considerably in the past year. However, a

small minority of pupils are persistently absent from school, despite your best efforts and the use of appropriate strategies to tackle the problem.

Pupils feel safe at school and say that adults help them if they are upset or worried. The vast majority of pupils, parents and staff say that behaviour is well managed. A very small minority of parents have concerns about pupils' behaviour but, during the inspection, no incidents of poor behaviour were observed.

Inspection findings

- First, we agreed to review your actions to improve teaching at key stage 1 in all subjects, and especially in phonics and writing. You and other leaders have provided training for staff which is improving the consistency of the teaching of writing and developing pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics. You regularly monitor teaching and pupils' progress to ensure that your actions are making a positive difference. Inspection activities confirm that teachers model learning in phonics, which supports pupils to practise and develop their skills and build on previous learning. Pupils read regularly and enjoy talking about events in the stories they are reading. They consistently use their secure understanding of phonics to read accurately. Good teaching of writing supports pupils to develop their vocabulary and make their writing more interesting. Effective teaching in mathematics helps pupils to consolidate their understanding and develop their skills to solve problems.
- Second, I wanted to establish how effectively you support disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. You implement precisely focused teaching interventions as well as social and emotional support for pupils when required. Consequently, most current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, are catching up. You, along with governors, routinely monitor the impact of the support you provide. This helps you to assure yourselves that it is having sufficient impact and providing value for money.
- We observed an English lesson in a mixed class of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, during which pupils were using pictures and a video clip to develop their skills of inference. This sparked pupils' interest and motivated them to focus well. The teacher provided clear instructions and asked searching questions in order to explore pupils' understanding. Pupils' enthusiasm generated a hubbub of excitement as they confidently contributed their ideas. A palpable sense of anticipation ensued as pupils eagerly watched the video clip to find out if their suggestions were correct. Discussion with pupils and an evaluation of their work over time demonstrated that pupils could clearly explain their inferences, both verbally and in their written work.
- Additional help that you provide for the majority of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is having a positive impact. Pupils are gaining in confidence and developing a can-do approach to their learning. The majority of these pupils are making strong and often accelerated progress, which is helping them to catch up. For example, pupils' writing is becoming more imaginative and they have greatly improved their handwriting. They are also

developing the ability to use their investigative and reasoning skills to solve problems in mathematics. However, a minority of pupils are not making sufficient progress to reach the standards expected of them. In some cases, this is not helped by higher rates of absence.

- My final line of enquiry explored how effectively leaders, including governors, are improving the attendance of boys and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders take concerted action to improve attendance. To help you emphasise the importance of regular attendance, you send newsletters home, meet with parents and reward good attendance. You also liaise closely with the educational welfare officer to support families whose children are persistently absent. When absence is linked to pupils' emotional needs, the school's learning mentor provides counselling support and play therapy. Although a small minority of pupils continue to have higher absence, your unremitting determination is paying dividends. Consequently, most pupils are keen to come to school, their attitudes to learning are positive and attendance has improved considerably.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they sustain improvements to teaching in all subjects at key stage 1, so that pupils consistently achieve expected standards for their age and more pupils achieve higher standards
- additional teaching support accelerates progress for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities who need to catch up
- they further improve attendance for the few pupils who have higher than average absence.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Bath and Wells, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Beeks
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the leaders responsible for English and mathematics, one of whom is the deputy headteacher. I met with governors and the multi-academy trust's assistant director of learning and achievement. I checked the school's single central record and discussed your safeguarding procedures. We reviewed the school's latest assessment information, and your self-evaluation and

development plans. Together, we observed phonics in the early years and key stage 1, and English in Year 6. I spoke with pupils during the day and heard several pupils read. We jointly reviewed pupils' work in English and mathematics in key stage 1 and Year 6. I talked to parents at the beginning of the day, and I considered the 51 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and additional comments. I also reviewed your most recent questionnaire for parents. I took account of the 14 responses to the online staff questionnaire and the 35 responses to the pupil survey.