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Mr Stuart Keep
Headteacher
Bishop Ridley Church of England VA Primary School
Northumberland Avenue
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Dear Mr Keep

Short inspection of Bishop Ridley Church of England VA Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 June 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Following your appointment as headteacher in September 2017, you quickly identified that changes were needed to improve pupils' achievement. Since the previous inspection, outcomes for pupils, particularly in writing at key stage 2, have declined. Together with your governors, you have gained an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and what needs to be better. Having identified that standards in writing needed to improve, you put actions in place to address this. For example, you introduced a new assessment system to check the progress that pupils make. This has helped leaders have a better understanding of pupils' achievement.

You and your leaders have worked hard to make this a nurturing school where pupils are well looked after. Pupils I spoke to, and the overwhelming majority of parents, agree. The school's values are known well by pupils, and they promote the caring ethos of the school. Pupils focus on one of the six values each half term, which helps them to better understand what they mean.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are robust and fit for purpose. Training for staff is up to date and regularly reviewed so that staff are supported in their understanding of current statutory guidance. Clear systems are in place for passing on any concerns. School records are detailed and of a high quality. As

designated safeguarding lead, you ensure that referrals to outside agencies are timely. Records show that you work well with these agencies so that vulnerable children and families receive appropriate help and support. Pre-employment checks are carried out in accordance with requirements and these checks are recorded in the single central record, which you regularly check with governors.

The behaviour of pupils around the school is calm and polite. Pupils say that they feel safe in school, and the parents I spoke to agree. Pupils understand about different forms of bullying, including online bullying. They say that, although incidents of bullying are rare, they know who to talk to if they have a concern. Pupils know how to make sensible choices out of school so that they can keep themselves safe.

Inspection findings

- First, we agreed to explore how successfully leaders support teachers in improving the achievement of middle-ability pupils in writing at key stage 2. This is because, in the past, middle-ability pupils' progress in writing was less than in their other subjects, and their attainment was less than middle-ability pupils nationally.
- You and your leadership team have implemented a range of actions to improve writing. These have included regular opportunities to write at length, and to write across the curriculum in other subjects. For example, pupils made effective use of their writing skills when they wrote in science about how sound travels through different materials. These approaches are having a positive effect on pupils' writing. Their work is routinely presented well. A wider range of punctuation is used accurately, which enables pupils to write with greater fluency. Furthermore, pupils are selecting vocabulary for its impact on the reader, which is enriching their writing.
- Although achievement by the end of Year 6 has improved, progress across the key stage is still inconsistent. Some pupils' work is untidy and errors persist, for example in basic punctuation and grammar. This limits their progress. Assessment information supports this, and more work is needed to strengthen rates of progress equally across the key stage.
- Next, we considered how effectively leaders support teachers to improve achievement for middle-ability pupils in key stage 1 mathematics. This is because, in the past, middle-ability pupils have made less progress than they should.
- Senior leaders have a clear approach to improvement, which is being implemented consistently in lessons. Work in pupils' books demonstrates that you have been successful in strengthening their progress by the end of the key stage. I saw pupils use prior knowledge to build on their learning, which supports them well when tackling more challenging calculations. The curriculum affords regular opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills and solve problems. This enables pupils to deepen their learning. However, within the key stage, some pupils' misconceptions are not addressed quickly enough and, as a result, some errors in their books persistently recur. This limits pupils' progress over time. More work is needed to achieve consistent progress in mathematics across the key stage.
- Finally, we considered what the school has done to reduce rates of persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils. Although overall rates of persistent absence were similar to

the national average, persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils was higher than the national average for this group.

- You and your staff have worked hard to make the importance of daily attendance at school clear to the whole school community. You have celebrated good attendance, for example in assemblies and with an attendance cup. When attendance does not improve, you and your leaders make appropriate use of external agencies. Some cases are complex, and so you and your team work closely with these families to understand the reasons why pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. As a result, persistent absence for some disadvantaged pupils has improved, but for others it has remained too high. We agreed that more work is needed to reduce rates of persistent absence for this group.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress continues to improve, particularly in writing at key stage 2, and in mathematics at key stage 1, so that their achievement is in line with national averages
- work continues to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent so that a higher proportion attend school regularly.

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

Yours sincerely

David Lloyd
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held meetings with you and your deputy headteacher and met with three governors. I visited classes with you, reviewed pupils' books and interrogated assessment information and documentation about attendance. I talked to parents, observed the behaviour of pupils around the school and at playtime and talked informally to a group of pupils. I talked with a range of staff and evaluated documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, the single central record and other safeguarding procedures and practices. I considered the staff questionnaire and 51 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.