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Mr Stuart Whiteland
Headteacher
All Saints Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Datchworth
Hollybush Lane
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Hertfordshire
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Dear Mr Whiteland

Short inspection of All Saints Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Datchworth

Following my visit to the school on 3 July 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 April 2014

This school continues to be good.

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

You are a determined headteacher who leads your team to ensure that pupils enjoy their learning in a safe environment. You and your English and mathematics leaders are valued by your staff, governors, parents and pupils. They trust you to make the right decisions so that the school continues to develop as it has since the previous inspection.

Pupils are mature and confident. They behave exceptionally well. When they play and work together, they demonstrate that they know the school rules. Pupils have an impressive attitude to learning. They are proud of their school. They enjoy challenges they are set and recognise that this helps them to make effective progress in English and mathematics.

Governors know their school extremely well and are self-reflective. They ensure that their training is up to date and offer you appropriate challenge and support. Together with you, governors have ensured that safeguarding is their top priority. Governors talk with confidence about the use and impact of activities funded by the pupil premium grant and the primary sport premium.

All parents who spoke to me on the playground commented overwhelmingly about

how much their children enjoy school. The vast majority who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, were supportive of the school's work and recognised how much progress pupils make. One rightly commented, 'Learning is integrated seamlessly with being a church school.' A number of parents have had prior experience of other schools before sending their children to your school. They particularly commented on how much this school offers its pupils socially and academically.

You have focused your work on addressing the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. Pupils' work is moderated within your own school and with other local schools to ensure the accuracy of assessment. This has helped to identify how pupils can improve. All leaders plan how to develop their areas of responsibility and are held to account for doing so. This results in a varied and exciting curriculum being offered throughout the school. Subject leaders for English and mathematics monitor the effectiveness of teaching and correctly identify priorities for further development. They support staff with using consistent approaches to teaching and challenge any underperformance of individual pupils. This is helping pupils to make better progress.

Your evaluations of the school are informed by a secure range of evidence. You make effective use of the 'light touch' support given by the local authority. As a result, you have identified appropriate priorities for school improvement. These include the enhancement of the teaching of phonics. This has led to the proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected threshold this year in the phonics screening check exceeding that nationally.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Documents and records of pupils causing concern are well maintained. You give pupils and families appropriate support when it is needed. You hold other agencies to account, when required, to benefit the pupils.

Staff training is kept up to date at least annually. Staff know what might indicate a concern and how to report it. They know pupils very well, which means that support is tailored to meet individual needs. Your procedures for checking the suitability of new members of staff to work with pupils are thorough.

Pupils say that they feel safe and they demonstrate that they know how to stay safe. They behave with a maturity that comes from the knowledge that they are in a secure and nurturing environment. Records are well maintained and confirm that bullying is rare. Pupils told me that they could speak to any adult in school if they were worried.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed that I would look at how successfully leaders maintain all statutory information. This was because, while some

information available online is of high quality, some policies and information on the school website were not reviewed in the given timescale before the inspection. This meant that parents were not able to access all current information.

- You addressed most of the areas identified before the end of the inspection. The policies on your website were updated quickly because they had been reviewed in a timely manner by governors but had not been made available online. Governors need to ensure that there is a robust system in place so that the information available to parents is always current.
- Your curriculum information is of a very high quality. It tells parents exactly what each cohort will study every year and how the skills in each subject will develop through the year.
- For my second line of enquiry, I focused on how leaders ensure that pupils make the same progress in mathematics as in English. This was an area for improvement at the time of the previous inspection. In 2017, mathematics progress was still below that of English in key stage 2. Attainment was lower than that expected nationally for middle prior attaining pupils in Year 2. However, attainment in Year 6 was broadly average.
- You have correctly identified this as a priority in your school development plan. As a result of effective leadership, there is now a consistent approach throughout the school to teaching mathematics. All staff use modelling, high-quality practical equipment and questioning designed to support pupils' progress. Lower-ability pupils are enabled to tackle the same learning as their peers as a result of effective support from teaching assistants. Guidance and targets in books help pupils to make progress.
- Some teachers do not check pupils' understanding before explaining how to tackle a task. As a result, pupils who can already do the work do not make progress while the activity is modelled for those who need it. This is the case in the teaching of writing as well as in mathematics. This is not in line with school policy, and applying your policy consistently should strengthen the progress of all pupils.
- For my final line of enquiry, I looked at how successful leaders are in ensuring that boys' achievement in writing is as strong as it is for girls. Although the end of key stage assessments improved in 2017, boys' attainment remained lower in writing than in other subjects.
- During the inspection, I saw evidence that boys are now writing at the same standard as girls. Written work in subjects such as history and religious education is of the same standard as in English books. This is because clear guidance is given to pupils to help them to improve. However, you agree that pupils' starting points sometimes need more consideration before planning what to teach to the whole class so that all pupils to make even better progress.
- Pupils' handwriting has been a focus and their letters are now consistently formed throughout the school. Pupils' vocabulary is very well developed and this is supported by the deep questioning used by adults.
- The progress of current pupils is strong in all but a couple of year groups. Your

provisional end of key stage writing assessments have improved considerably this year, especially for boys. They are now at least in line with those nationally.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there are procedures in place to ensure that all published statutory information is up to date
- the teaching of mathematics and writing meets the needs of all pupils regardless of their different starting points.

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

Yours sincerely

Paula Masters
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We discussed the lines of enquiry for this inspection, the school's internal evaluation of its performance, plans for future development and information about the progress and attainment of current pupils. Meetings were held with you, two subject leaders and some of your governors, including your chair of governors. I met with a representative of the local authority. I looked at evidence to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. I visited all classes with you. I looked at samples of pupils' work. I spoke with eight pupils about their learning and well-being. I also spoke with pupils informally in lessons, around school and at playtime.

I examined policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils, including mandatory checks made for the safer recruitment of staff. I looked at logs of behaviour. I held discussions with you and other staff about safeguarding and attendance. The views of 59 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered. I also took account of the views of 16 staff who completed their online survey during the inspection.