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Mrs Tina Farr
Headteacher
St Ebbe's Church of England Aided Primary School
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Oxford
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Dear Mrs Farr

Short inspection of St Ebbe's Church of England Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 November 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 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You were appointed as headteacher in September 2018 and, with the support of a highly experienced deputy headteacher, you have continued to build on the successful work of the previous headteacher. You have built upon existing strengths and have already introduced improvements. For example, you have updated the behaviour policy to ensure that there is a consistent approach to behaviour management across the school. The impact of this has already been noticed by pupils and parents alike, who say that the school is now 'calmer than it used to be'. You have also introduced a system for tracking pupils' progress to enable staff to share information more easily with senior leaders and with one another.

Most pupils enjoy coming to the school. They particularly enjoy the opportunity to participate in educational visits and themed days, for example 'maths day' when all curriculum activities link to a central mathematical theme. During my visit, pupils in key stage 2 were visiting Blenheim Palace as part of the whole school's work to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. Pupils in key stage 1, who had visited Blenheim Palace the day before, spoke excitedly about the visit and were able to tell me about many of the things they had learned during the day. Pupils also enjoy the numerous extra-curricular activities that are available to them. During the inspection, I was able to watch the musical theatre club rehearse an extract from the musical 'Stomp', which was being performed to a very high standard.

Both you and the previous headteacher have addressed the last inspection's recommendations to ensure that the most able pupils were sufficiently challenged in writing. Changes made to the teaching of writing skills across the school have had a positive effect. Provisional information for 2018 indicates that the progress made in writing by the most able pupils by the end of Year 6 has improved for the past two years, and is now well above the average progress made by other pupils nationally. Outcomes at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 show that the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard in writing has also improved and is now well above the national average. Work in books and in-school progress information confirm that the most able pupils currently at the school are making good progress in writing. Leaders are determined to build on this success. Staff are currently working alongside the local authority on a project funded by the Strategic Schools Improvement Fund to provide enhanced creative opportunities for writing for disadvantaged pupils.

The other area of improvement from the previous inspection centred upon the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Following improvements in 2017, the attendance figures for these pupils fell in 2018 and leaders are currently implementing strategies to improve the attendance of these pupils.

The governing body supports and challenges leaders effectively. Governors have a good working knowledge of progress information and use this to ask pertinent questions, for example about the progress made by disadvantaged pupils at the school. Governors are aware of the school's priorities for improvement and visit regularly to question both senior and subject leaders.

Parents are highly supportive of the school. They appreciate the previous headteacher's work to introduce improvements within the school and are highly complimentary about the immediate impact you have had since becoming headteacher. One parent, echoing the views of many, said: 'I'm impressed at the start made by the new headteacher. The staff seem energised by her vision for the school.'

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The safety and welfare of all pupils and staff have a high priority at your school. Your designated safeguarding lead successfully works with outside agencies to support pupils and families. The safeguarding governor visits regularly to review and evaluate safeguarding procedures and to change them as necessary. Leaders ensure that there is ongoing training for staff and governors, so that they know how to maintain pupils' safety. Pupils feel safe in the school, and this view is shared by parents and staff.

Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is. They say that the introduction of more adults on the playground at breaktimes has led to fewer incidents of bullying, and that staff are 'good at sorting it out' when bullying does occur. However, they do feel that sometimes they are left to sort out their own

disagreements without adult support. Pupils are aware of the potential dangers of using the internet and that they should not share passwords. Leaders have planned an e-safety evening for parents later this year to help them further understand the dangers that their children face online.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look at specific areas of the school's provision: the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements; the progress of disadvantaged pupils; the progress of the most able and most-able disadvantaged pupils in writing; how effectively leaders ensure regular attendance for all pupils; and the breadth and balance of the curriculum provided.
- The attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils have improved over the past year. Provisional information for 2018 shows that disadvantaged pupils leaving at the end of Year 6 made better progress in both reading and writing than other pupils nationally with similar starting points. This indicates that the difference between themselves and other pupils is diminishing. However, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 2 were not as strong. This was mainly due to the high proportion of disadvantaged pupils who also have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities in this year group. School progress information and work in books seen during the inspection indicate that most disadvantaged pupils are making good progress from their starting points. The school has used additional funding well to address barriers to learning and to give support to vulnerable pupils. However, leaders recognise that further work is needed to ensure that these pupils continue to make strong progress.
- The present curriculum is broad, balanced and accessible to all. Subject leaders regularly review the curriculum to ensure that there is full coverage of all subjects. Careful, meaningful links are made between subjects, such as geography and science, to ensure that pupils have opportunity to apply skills learned in other subject areas. However, you feel that there is scope to improve your curriculum further and, during my visit, enthusiastically shared your vision for a new curriculum which is being introduced later this academic year. You describe the new curriculum as 'underpinned with knowledge and meaningful experiences, where children feel empowered to enact change'. You are also determined that the curriculum fully utilises Oxford's unique local environment. Plans shared with me during the inspection certainly have the potential to energise pupils' learning and enable them to experience memorable activities and visits.
- Attendance overall is broadly in line with the national average for primary schools. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average for all primary pupils. Persistent absenteeism of pupils, many of whom are disadvantaged, remains high. Leaders are working tirelessly to engage with these pupils' parents and carers to ensure more regular attendance, and the school is also receiving support from the local authority. Leaders have introduced a number of measures in a drive to improve the attendance of these pupils, including extending the role of the home-school worker from part-time to full-

time, extending the route of the walking bus and changing breakfast club provision. The most recent attendance figures show that these strategies are beginning to have a positive impact on reducing persistent absences. Leaders are also currently researching ways to enhance the curriculum to further engage these pupils' interests.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, especially of those who are persistently absent, improves so that it is at least as good as that of their peers
- recent improvements in progress made by disadvantaged pupils are sustained so that they achieve at least as well as other pupils nationally.

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

Brian Macdonald
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher at several points during the day to discuss the school's effectiveness. Together, we undertook a learning walk, observed learning in four classes and looked at pupils' work. I met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, and held telephone conversations with both a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese. I reviewed a wide range of information, including: safeguarding policies and procedures; and the school's information about pupils' performance and attendance records. I considered 27 responses from parents to Ofsted's confidential online survey, and 115 responses from parents to Ofsted's questionnaire Parent View, including 106 free-text comments. I also spoke to several parents before school and received one letter from a parent. In addition, I took account of 69 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.