

23 November 2018

Mr Christopher Allen
Executive Headteacher
West Raynham Church of England Primary Academy
West Raynham
Fakenham
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Dear Mr Allen

Short inspection of West Raynham Church of England Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 14 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You and the governors ensure that the school is a focal point in the rural community it serves. This is because you have created a culture where everyone is welcomed and respected for the contribution they make to the school's success. The nurturing ethos at the heart of your school enables pupils to flourish. Staff know your pupils and their families well. This helps you and your staff to give appropriately targeted academic and pastoral support. Pupils told me, 'This is a really friendly place because everyone knows each other well.' Pupils can explain the school's values of friendship, generosity, trust, respect, responsibility, love and hope. They understand that demonstrating these values will help them to grow up to be 'good and respectful adults'.

Since the previous inspection of your predecessor school, there have been some significant changes. West Raynham is now one of four schools in the Unity Federation of Church of England and Community Primary Academies. As executive headteacher of these schools, you use the shared arrangements to benefit them all. Joint work across the federation enables teachers to check that their assessments of pupils' work are accurate, to have access to a range of training opportunities and to share good practice.

Your high levels of professionalism and organisation contribute to the smooth running of the school when you are not on site. Governors have ensured that your role at West Raynham is strengthened by the experienced head of school and the middle leaders who work across the federation.

Staff feel that they have increased their confidence and skills as a result of this support.

Additionally, since the previous inspection, the school has become an academy. In December 2015, West Raynham joined the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT). Trust leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use this to make sure that you and your staff receive the right type of support and guidance. Nevertheless, they insist that improvements take place quickly so that you can meet the high expectations held for all pupils.

The trust has established clear roles and responsibilities for you, other leaders, and governors. As a result, there is a highly consistent approach to improving the school. The trust makes sure that actions to move the school forward are monitored closely and leaders at all levels are held rigorously to account. You and your leaders' realistic view of the aspects needing to improve means there were no surprises about the areas I identified for further improvement during this inspection. Your sharp action plans show clearly how you are already addressing the weaker elements of the school's work.

A particular challenge for you, your leaders and governors is the high number of pupils who start or leave the school other than at the usual times. These pupils benefit from strong support and excellent nurturing, which ensures that pupils settle quickly and are ready to learn. You act swiftly to assess each pupil's progress to establish whether they need additional support. Records show that these pupils make progress at a similar rate as their peers, with some making larger gains to ensure gaps in their learning diminish.

You make sure that staff create a learning environment that is well organised, attractive and engaging. Lessons are purposeful and calm, and there is a harmonious atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils told me that they especially enjoy learning, because of the support and encouragement that they receive from your 'kind and helpful' staff. They appreciate how their teachers make it really clear what they need to do to edit and improve their work so they 'can get better and learn more'.

The vast majority of parents are pleased with the school. Many who provided responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, spoke about the friendly, approachable staff and the good progress their children make. One parent reflected the views of many by stating, 'My children are really thriving at this school. They are receiving a great education and are making really good progress. They look forward to coming to school every day.' Almost all parents would recommend the school to others.

Since the previous inspection, changes in staffing have affected the continuity and quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. You acted quickly to challenge weaker teaching and have taken effective action to bring about improvement. More recently, staffing has stabilised and your current staff are working effectively to

strengthen teaching and learning. You know there is still more work to be done to ensure that the effective teaching approaches in mathematics are firmly fixed across the school so that pupils' outcomes continue to improve.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have developed a shared understanding that the safeguarding of pupils is everyone's responsibility. You make appropriate checks on staff, governors, volunteers and regular visitors to the school to make sure that they are suitable people to work with children. These checks are recorded meticulously.

You make sure that staff and governors receive regular training covering different aspects of safeguarding. As a result, staff know exactly what to look out for and identify potentially vulnerable pupils quickly. Where there are concerns, you take swift action to support these pupils, including making referrals to the local authority where appropriate. You are tenacious in making sure that referrals are followed up and action taken where needed. You keep detailed and well-organised records.

Pupils are confident that they can talk to an adult in school if they are worried about anything. They understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations, such as when using the internet or crossing the road. Pupils say that bullying in their school is very rare, and they are certain that staff will deal with any incidents of bullying or misbehaviour that may occur. The great majority of parents who responded to the Parent View online survey agreed that their children are happy and safe at West Raynham Church of England Primary Academy.

Inspection findings

- At our initial meeting, we agreed the lines of enquiry to explore so that I could be satisfied that the school remains good. Firstly, I considered how well staff meet the needs of middle-attaining pupils and most-able pupils, so that they make strong progress and consequently attain the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Outcomes for the last three years show that the proportion of pupils attaining greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, and the higher standards at the end of Year 6, varied too much because the progress some pupils made was not good enough. While the results were skewed by the small numbers of pupils involved, you correctly identified that middle-attaining pupils and most-able pupils were at times not challenged to reach their potential. You concluded that teachers' expectations of what these pupils can achieve have been too low.
- You and your leaders have more recently introduced a range of effective support to help pupils to achieve well. Through staff training, you are challenging teachers to plan opportunities to encourage pupils to think independently and learn in a variety of ways. Teachers provide guidance and prompts for learning, which they display in the classrooms for pupils to use in their lessons. During our joint observations of lessons, we saw pupils provided with a range of challenging tasks that motivated them to think for themselves and make their own choices.

Teachers and teaching assistants often use targeted questioning effectively to probe pupils' deeper understanding.

- When I met with a group of pupils, they spoke positively about how staff challenge them and help them to think deeply in their lessons. Work in their books shows that most pupils are given tasks that are suitably demanding for them. This is securing better outcomes for the middle-attaining and most-able pupils.
- Another line of enquiry focused on how leaders are ensuring that pupils achieve well in mathematics across the school. Improving the quality of teaching in mathematics was an area for improvement in the previous inspection report. Published assessment information and the school's own information show that over the last three years, compared with national results, pupils did not achieve as well in mathematics as they did in reading and writing.
- You and your leaders identified that pupils had some gaps in their understanding of basic mathematical skills and were not always confident in applying their knowledge to solve problems. The federation's experienced mathematics leader has led training for staff to make sure they teach high-quality mathematics lessons consistently throughout the school. I observed the effective teaching of core mathematical skills, along with regular opportunities for pupils to think deeply and solve problems through a range of interesting and enjoyable activities.
- As a result of these focused actions, work in pupils' books, displays around the school and the school's assessment information show that most pupils are now making better progress in mathematics. However, you have identified that recent improvements in the teaching of mathematics need to be firmly in place across the school so that pupils consistently achieve as well as they should.
- Finally, I looked at how leaders monitor the quality of teaching across all subjects to ensure that pupils achieve well. I wanted to investigate whether the actions of your subject leaders enable pupils to make consistently good progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Your subject leaders check the quality of teaching in their subjects rigorously and in many different ways. This includes observing lessons, scrutinising teachers' plans, talking to pupils and looking at pupils' workbooks. Consequently, your subject leaders can identify where pupils' progress is best and where it could be better. Governors hold subject leaders to account for this work by meeting with them regularly to discuss pupils' outcomes, strengths in the teaching of their subject and areas to improve.
- You plan the wider curriculum well to foster a love of learning, as well as encouraging pupils to care for others and the world around them. The school's Christian ethos, as well as the attention you give to developing an understanding of world faiths, customs and cultures, further enhance pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils enjoy the many and varied topics planned for them. For example, at the time of the inspection, the whole school was decorated with striking displays linked to Remembrance Day. I could see from their work in history, religious education and art that pupils were inspired by this theme. However, while pupils have access to a rich and varied curriculum, you have already identified that they are not always challenged to reach their potential

across all subjects and that expectations of what pupils can achieve need to be raised.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that teachers:

- build on the recent improvements in the teaching of mathematics so that pupils' outcomes continue to improve
- consistently plan and teach lessons that challenge pupils in other subjects as well as they do in reading, writing and mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Norwich, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Webb
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Together, you and I visited all classes across the school. I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke informally with pupils. I met with you and your head of school to discuss progress since the previous inspection. We also discussed outcomes for pupils and the impact of decisions leaders have made. I also met with your federation leaders for mathematics and the curriculum. I held meetings with the chair and vice-chair of the local governing body and representatives from the trust, including the chief executive officer (CEO), to discuss their work with the school. I also spoke with a group of pupils more formally to talk about their school experience.

Additionally, I scrutinised a variety of sources of information including: the school's improvement plans; leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness; your records of monitoring and evaluation; minutes of local governing body meetings; reports of governor visits; and the school's assessment information for all year groups.

I also looked at the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures, the records of checks leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children, and information relating to attendance. A discussion was held with you and your head of school, as two of the school's designated safeguarding leads.

Furthermore, I took into account the 24 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire,

Parent View, and the 24 free-text responses from parents. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.