

11 December 2018

Miss Rachel Doe
Headteacher
Stoke Row Church of England School
Stoke Row
Henley-on-Thames
Oxfordshire
RG9 5QS

Dear Miss Doe

Short inspection of Stoke Row Church of England School

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Stoke Row Church of England School has retained the positive ethos identified at the previous inspection through which pupils thrive both academically and socially. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of education provided by staff and feel well informed about the work of the school. This is evident in the many positive statements made in Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View and on the day of the inspection. Parents commented on 'the highly nurturing environment', 'the safe and positive atmosphere' and 'the dedicated, caring and passionate staff'. One parent's comment that 'there was a wonderful, close family feel at the school' was voiced by many others.

Focused leadership, including that of governors, has ensured that where there have been temporary changes to senior staffing, the school's commitment to improve has not wavered. You are providing a clear and effective vision for improvement which is shared by all staff at the school. Through the school's monitoring and support systems, you have ensured good-quality teaching, learning and assessment in most areas of the curriculum.

In collaboration with the governing body, leadership has continued to improve the quality of education and pastoral support since the previous inspection. You have established effective monitoring and support systems to develop the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in all areas of the curriculum. As a result, in the online staff survey, staff are unanimous in feeling very well supported.

Governance at Stoke Row is strong. The governing body is well led and provides effective challenge and support in equal measure. Governors are highly ambitious for the academic and social success of pupils. Governors visit the school frequently to gather pertinent information about the quality of education and pose effective challenge for school leaders at all levels.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are kind, respectful and welcoming and contribute fully to the positive learning environment throughout the school. Pupils are enthusiastic about learning and support each other's learning in lessons. Throughout the curriculum, pupils develop an informed understanding of the importance of free speech, tolerance and democracy. Through the British Council's global citizenship programme, pupils learn about the lives of pupils in India and Zambia.

You correctly judge early years to be a strength of the school. Children thrive in the setting through well-structured activities that immerse them in imaginary worlds. Consequently, children make good progress in the development of their knowledge, skills and understanding.

Where improvement is required, you and your leadership team take decisive and effective action. For example, your focus on improving pupils' progress in mathematics resulted in good progress and above-average attainment at the end of key stage 2, in 2018. However, you acknowledge that there are still areas for improvement. For example, your action plan identifies the need to increase pupils' writing attainment at the end of key stage 1. You also recognise that pupils do not develop strong subject knowledge in history, geography and science.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, are meticulous in ensuring that all safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and that records are maintained securely. Leaders ensure that the school's recruitment procedures are fit for purpose and that all checks regarding adults' suitability to work with pupils are recorded appropriately. Leaders are vigilant about keeping pupils safe both physically and emotionally. Staff receive regular safeguarding training that enables adults to be alert to safeguarding concerns and know how to respond.

Pupils spoke to me with confidence and understanding about how adults kept them safe. Stoke Row is a very safe and harmonious place for pupils to learn and flourish. Pupils know the importance of keeping themselves safe on the internet. All parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their children were safe at school.

Inspection findings

- This inspection's first line of enquiry focused on how leaders ensure that pupils maintain improvements in reading, writing and mathematics at both key stage 1 and key stage 2. The previous inspection report identified the importance of increasing the level of challenge for the most able pupils. The previous inspection

report also stated that leaders new to their roles should improve their classroom practice. Leaders have worked hard to ensure that all pupils, including the most able pupils, receive additional challenge in most areas of the curriculum. For example, I observed pupils in the class for Years 5 and 6 skilfully structuring their own stories in response to the structure they had studied in 'The Firework Maker's Daughter' by Philip Pullman.

- All pupils at the end of key stage 2 exceeded the national averages for reading, writing and mathematics in 2017 and 2018. The most able pupils at the end of key stage 2 exceeded the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics for the higher standard in 2017 and 2018. Pupils' progress in reading at key stage 2 was significantly above the national average. Additionally, pupils at the end of key stage 1 exceeded the national averages in reading and mathematics at the expected standard and greater depth in 2017 and 2018.
- Pupils do not, however, attain well at the expected level at the end of key stage 1 in writing. You have reviewed and improved pupils' self-editing skills. You have also used high-quality texts to support pupils' knowledge about the use of language in writing. However, pupils do not give enough consideration to the audience, purpose and text type that they are writing nor when choosing words and sentences. Teachers do not provide the same level of expert guidance for writing in areas of the curriculum other than English
- The second key line of enquiry was about the breadth and balance of the curriculum. The curriculum is well structured, offering pupils a range of subjects. Work in pupils' books demonstrates that pupils develop strong knowledge and understanding of French. Most pupils make strong progress from simple vocabulary to full sentences. Pupils also develop an appreciation of different forms of music through the creation of rainforest musical instruments. Pupils also develop strong skills and understanding in physical education (PE). However, pupils do not develop strong sequential understanding and knowledge of topics in history and science.
- The third line of enquiry focused on how leaders have ensured that children continue to reach a good level of development in Reception. Leaders and staff ensure that every single child enjoys coming to school. Parents told me how much they valued the academic and pastoral support that their children received in Reception. Children are highly enthusiastic about learning and flourish.
- Leaders and staff provide skilfully structured activities designed to stimulate children's language and communications skills alongside a breadth of other skills. For example, children told me about their creations of boxes for Father Christmas's holiday, about a magical castle, and about paths for rabbits.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide very strong phonics support for children. As a result, children love reading and regularly practise sounding out words with each other and reading books to teddy bears and dolls.
- The previous inspection report identified the importance of taking full advantage of the new setting. Both the indoor and outdoor settings are very well used. Children engage very well with the outdoor equipment. The setting is highly inclusive, ensuring that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive tailored support. For example, I observed children searching for

words and objects in the outdoor area with enthusiasm and focus.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils in key stage 1 improve their writing skills and consider the audience, purpose and text type when they are writing
- teachers' guidance for writing in other areas of the curriculum is as strong as guidance for writing in English
- pupils increase their knowledge, skills and understanding of topics in history and science.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing board, 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

Susan Aykin
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

For this inspection, I had meetings with you, other senior leaders and middle leaders. I had a meeting with two governors. I spoke with pupils informally in classrooms and when walking around the school's site. I also met formally with a group of 16 pupils to gather their views about the school. I visited a range of lessons to look at pupils' learning across all phases and carried out a separate scrutiny of pupils' work.

Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined along with the record of recruitment checks carried out on all adults working at the school. A range of documentation was looked at, including: the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; information relating to pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour; the minutes of governors' meetings; and curriculum plans. I considered the views of 172 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text comments. I also considered the views of 15 members of staff and 57 pupils who responded to Ofsted's online survey.