

24 December 2018

Mrs Clare Rinaldi
Headteacher
Avishayes Community Primary School
Fairway Rise
Chard
Somerset
TA20 1NS

Dear Mrs Rinaldi

Short inspection of Avishayes Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 December 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 May 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

There have been staffing changes, including to leadership, since the last inspection. On your arrival, leaders and governors quickly revisited their evaluations of the school's effectiveness. Together you have produced a very specific action plan, which builds on the school's strengths and focuses on the right aspects for improvement. This, combined with a strong drive from leaders at every level, is ensuring that the school is responding positively to the areas that require strengthening even further. Month on month you are making a notable difference. For example, you have tightened safeguarding procedures and pupils' attendance has improved rapidly this year.

Many pupils start school with knowledge and skills well below those expected for their age. When they leave, the proportions of pupils with skills and knowledge in line with their age are similar to those seen in other schools nationally.

Teaching builds precisely on children's needs in the Nursery and Reception Years. Transition from one class to the next in the early years foundation stage is highly successful. This, along with detailed initial assessments of what children know, can do and understand, ensures that children get off to a flying start. However, some pupils do not make consistently strong progress in a minority of classes elsewhere in the school. As a result, some catching up is required. Consequently, while most pupils make the good progress they should over time, too few pupils reach the

highest standards at the end of key stage 1 and 2. You are taking direct action to remedy this shortfall by supporting teachers to adapt their teaching and to plan work that is increasingly more challenging. However, this work is recent and has not yet had a full impact.

At the previous inspection the school leaders were asked to raise the quality of teaching and pupils' ability to solve problems in mathematics, and to develop pupils' handwriting and spelling skills. In 2018 almost every pupil in Year 6 met the required standards in the spelling, punctuation and grammar test. Workbooks are generally well presented. As a result of staff training, problem-solving now sits centrally in the mathematics curriculum and pupils are routinely expected to explain their mathematical understanding.

Safeguarding is effective.

Since your arrival, you have conducted a full review of safeguarding practices in the school. Support for the most vulnerable pupils is strong. Staff training is up to date and in line with legislation. Staff apply their training in keeping pupils safe and are confident in making referrals when they have concerns that a pupil may be at risk.

Safeguarding records are well organised and leaders who are responsible for safeguarding make timely referrals and work in close partnership with external agencies when required.

Staff responsible for staff vetting checks have ensured that recruitment arrangements and the single central record (SCR) meet requirements. The SCR is checked regularly by leaders and governors. Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry looked at whether the curriculum is demanding enough to challenge pupils to achieve their full potential. While pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 in English and mathematics is at the national average, the proportions of pupils reaching the highest standards are lower than that seen nationally.
- Over the last year there has been a comprehensive package of training to improve the teaching of mathematics. This work has been effective. In most classes, the mathematics curriculum provides ample opportunities for pupils to reason and solve problems. As a result, pupils deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts successfully.
- Increasingly, pupils edit and improve their work in English well. However, on occasions the amendments pupils make do not bring about sufficient improvements to the accuracy or complexity of their writing. The wider curriculum is not sufficiently demanding to deepen pupils' understanding of the more challenging concepts and key ideas in English, science and humanities. As a result, tasks planned do not enable pupils in lower key stage 2, and to a lesser extent further up the school, to gain knowledge and skills beyond those expected

for their age. Because of this, a minority of pupils are not yet achieving their full potential.

- Another aspect I looked at was pupils' absence because it has been high in the past. Leaders have tackled this head-on this term through stringent checks and work with external agencies. Leaders' actions are proving successful in remedying this weakness. Consequently, pupils' absence and persistent absenteeism have reduced noticeably. Current pupils attend well. This year, pupils' attendance is above the national average.
- My final line of enquiry looked at the impact of leaders' actions to bring about further improvements to pupils' academic achievements. There have been incremental improvements year on year to bring pupils' outcomes in line with the national average. However, too few pupils across the school have secure knowledge and skills in all three subjects of reading, writing and mathematics. Your recent work to hold teachers to account to improve pupils' combined attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is beginning to pay off. However, it is too early to see the impact required across the school.
- The leader of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) ensures that there are precise interventions in place so that pupils catch up when they fall behind. As a result, pupils make strong progress in these intervention lessons. However, the quality of provision for pupils with SEND is not checked well enough within their class lessons. As a result, this group of pupils make uneven progress across key stage 1.
- Senior and middle leaders' action plans are well thought out. Leaders are systematic in their checks on the quality of teaching. However, leaders have not yet been successful in ensuring that pupils make consistently strong progress to meet the highest standards. Teachers have not used all the information they have to plan work for pupils in Year 1 so that teaching builds on the skills and knowledge pupils gained in the Reception Year. Consequently, on occasions work on offer is sometimes too easy or too hard.
- Finally, I looked at the progress that children make in their Reception year in their early speaking and reading skills. Children who enter the school with limited speaking skills are supported exceptionally well. The early teaching of phonics is regular and systematic. Children are learning to use and apply their sounds when speaking and reading with confidence within the wide range of activities on offer. As a result, children are already beginning to write words and simple sentences accurately. Children benefit from the stimulating and exciting provision in the inside and outside learning environments.
- Strong caring support in Nursery and Reception means that children settle well and thrive here.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders' checks on teaching ensure that pupils deepen and apply their skills and knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics and have an equally secure

understanding in all three subjects

- the wider curriculum is demanding enough, particularly in lower key stage 2 to ensure that pupils achieve their potential
- pupils in Year 1 and those with SEND receive teaching that is closely matched to their needs so that 'catch-up' teaching is not needed further up the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Julie Carrington
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke with you, your deputy headteacher, middle leaders and five governors. I also held telephone discussions with a representative from Somerset local authority and the school's external adviser. We made visits to lessons to observe pupils' learning and gather their views about their learning. We scrutinised pupils' English, mathematics, reading and curriculum books from a range of year groups.

I considered a range of documentary evidence including: development plans; external reports of the school's effectiveness; school performance information; monitoring records; analysis of pupils' attendance; governing body minutes; and safeguarding documentation.

In addition, I took account of 11 responses to the Parent View online survey and the free-text messaging service. I gathered the views of staff through discussions during the inspection and reviewed the online staff survey.