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Mrs Victoria Anderson
Headteacher
Christ Church Primary School
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Dear Mrs Anderson

Short inspection of Christ Church Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 February 2019, 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 December 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Over the past six years, the school has more than doubled in size, moving from an infant school to a primary school with 12 classes. Leaders and governors have managed these changes effectively. Since the last inspection, you have strengthened leadership significantly. You have a well-established team of committed leaders who share your determination to ensure that pupils receive a high-quality education.

Pupils are friendly, polite and well-mannered. Their positive attitudes to learning are a real strength of the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school, where they work hard and behave well. During the inspection, pupils were very keen to tell me what they were learning about. The school's assessment information and work in pupils' books show that most pupils make good progress in a range of subjects across the curriculum. However, over the past three years, pupils have made less progress by the end of key stage 2 in reading than in writing and mathematics. You have made sure that improving pupils' progress in reading is a high priority. Your development plans include relevant actions, and leaders monitor the impact of these actions carefully.

Staff are proud to work at the school. All the staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire agreed that the school had improved since the last inspection. The staff I met during the inspection said they were well supported by leaders to carry out their roles effectively and that they appreciate the training opportunities they are given. All staff agreed that pupils are safe at school and that behaviour is good.

Most of the parents and carers who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and all of those who I met during the inspection are positive about the work of the school. All agreed that their children are happy and that they feel safe at school. Almost all this group of parents said that staff are approachable and that their children are well cared for.

At the last inspection, leaders were asked to further improve the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics, so that more pupils reached the higher standards. You have provided training for all staff to ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have secure subject knowledge of the mathematics curriculum and that they understand the expectations of what pupils can achieve in all year groups. Pupils achieve well in mathematics. At the end of 2017 and 2018, the proportion of pupils who attained the higher standard in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was in line with the national average.

Leaders were also asked to develop the role of subject leaders. You have ensured that there is a comprehensive plan in place to support the development of leaders at all levels. This includes personalised mentoring from you, the opportunity to work alongside professional peers within a local teaching alliance and bespoke training from an educational consultant. You have also ensured that leaders have sufficient time to carry out their roles. As a result, leaders understand their responsibilities well and they provide highly effective support to you in bringing about further school improvement.

Governors provide appropriate support and challenge for all leaders. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors are proud to be part of the school and are passionate about the academic and personal development of all pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have made sure that all staff receive regular up-to-date training. In addition, you check that all staff have a thorough understanding of the school's policies and procedures, including how to report any concerns they have. You and other members of the safeguarding team follow up any concerns swiftly. Child protection records are stored securely, and they contain relevant information that has been shared by other professionals. All staff make certain that the safeguarding of pupils is a high priority. The school's family liaison worker provides a range of additional support to any families who need it. Her timely intervention means that some problems can be resolved before they escalate into more serious concerns.

All pre-employment checks for staff working at the school meet statutory requirements. Members of the leadership team and the governing body have undertaken safer recruitment training.

The school's curriculum promotes the safety and well-being of pupils. For example, pupils were able to explain clearly how they stay safe when they use the internet.

Pupils also told me that they learn about the risks that strangers can pose and that they must talk to an adult if they are worried about something. The pupils I spoke to told me that bullying does not happen very often and that when it has occurred an adult has dealt with it quickly.

Inspection findings

- I wanted to find out about the progress children make in Reception. This is because, over the past three years, the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of Reception has been below the national figure. Staff make careful observations of what children can do and this information is used to ensure that the activities they plan build on what children already know and can do. Leaders ensure that the focus on language acquisition begins as soon as children start school. As a result, children become confident talkers who enjoy sharing their answers to questions and they engage enthusiastically in role-play activities.
- Children in the early years benefit from a broad curriculum and their learning journey books show that they make good progress in all areas of learning. The learning environment is well organised and allows children to make choices about how they will complete tasks. This promotes children's creativity. Leaders have made appropriate changes to the curriculum to ensure that a higher proportion of children than seen in the past have reading and writing skills that are typical for their age by the time they finish Reception. For example, children access daily phonics sessions and they take part in guided reading sessions each week. Children's books show that they make strong progress in writing, particularly in the way they form letters and in the content and the amount they write.
- My second line of enquiry was about progress in reading in key stage 2. Although rates of progress have improved over the past two years, by the end of key stage 2 pupils still make less progress in reading than in writing or mathematics. You have made developing a love of reading a priority for the whole school. Each class has a dedicated reading area and pupils are able to access a wide selection of high-quality texts. Pupils in all year groups can talk confidently and with passion about the books they have read and their favourite authors. Teachers make careful choices about whole-class texts, so that they are challenging and of high interest. Pupils' workbooks show that they develop good comprehension skills and progress is evident in the more detailed and sophisticated answers they are starting to produce. Occasionally, tasks do not provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils. This means that some pupils do not make the progress they need to reach the higher standards of which they are capable.
- Leaders have designed a curriculum that is broad and balanced. Pupils told me that they enjoy the topics they study, which have a history, geography or science theme. Teachers plan tasks that ensure that pupils acquire subject-specific knowledge and skills, for example map reading and knowledge of countries and cities within the United Kingdom, the chronology of World War Two and how to plan and carry out a scientific experiment. Pupils also spoke enthusiastically about their knowledge of religions and cultures different to their own. There is a definite sense that pupils respect and celebrate one another's differences. In

some year groups, teachers expertly enable pupils to develop more sophisticated skills, including empathy with ordinary people from the past and how to evaluate the impact of key figures in history. A whole-school curriculum map is used by teachers to ensure that there is progression within subjects through each key stage. However, in some year groups and subjects, pupils do not have enough opportunities to really deepen their understanding of what they are learning about.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue with their work to make sure that the most able pupils make strong progress to reach the higher standard in reading at the end of key stage 2
- there are opportunities in all year groups and in a wide range of subjects for pupils to deepen their understanding of what they are learning about.

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

Yours sincerely

Jo Evans
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders, parents and governors. I spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone. We visited classrooms and looked at pupils' work together. I looked at a selection of pupils' topic books with the senior leadership team. I also met with a group of pupils. I reviewed the school's website and documents, including the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks and child protection systems. I also reviewed the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, monitoring information and pupils' progress and assessment information. I took account of the 15 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also took account of the 28 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and the 16 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.