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Mrs Polly Goodson
Headteacher
St Anne's CofE Primary School
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Dear Mrs Goodson

Short inspection of St Anne's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 March 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 June 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 know your school well. Your self-evaluation document accurately reflects St Anne's CofE Primary School's strengths and improvement priorities. The school has many strengths. These include: effective senior leadership; pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning; safeguarding; the development of leadership and learning in the early years; and the school's tangible family ethos.

There is a strong family feel in the school, ensuring that the school lives out its vision to 'love, learn and grow together as part of God's family'. You are determined to raise aspirations for all pupils. Along with your leadership team, you have reviewed teaching and learning. You have improved the systems to hold teachers accountable for the progress and attainment of pupils. School assessment information shows that these improvements are beginning to show a positive impact in the achievement of current pupils. This is particularly so in reading and mathematics.

Together with other leaders, staff and governors, you have developed a welcoming and inclusive school. There are strong relationships between staff, pupils and their families. This enables pupils to flourish socially and academically, due to carefully planned learning and support which addresses their needs. Pupils are polite, respectful of each other and are well mannered. They said that they enjoy lessons and value the various sports clubs, residential trips and day visits. They value the opportunities to show responsibility, for example through membership of the school parliament.

The vast majority of parents feel that the school is very good at nurturing their children and developing them academically. Some parents typically commented that, 'The school is brilliant.' During discussions with inspectors, parents stated that they are pleased with their children's transition into Nursery and also onto high school.

Leaders and staff have taken effective action to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. You were asked to provide more opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects across the curriculum. Pupils' books show that writing is used effectively to record learning in other subjects. This does not detract from the subject-specific skills being taught.

You were also asked to improve the teaching of handwriting, so that pupils' work is always presented to the highest standard. Again, pupils' books show an improved pride in their work. Teachers have raised their expectations of presentation. Prompt sheets, placed in the front of the pupils' books, provide a reminder of the higher standards expected.

Finally, you were asked to summarise and present the extensive information held by senior leaders in a format which allows comparison between the school's performance and that of other schools nationally. Leaders have revised the processes for recording and sharing performance data with governors. Governors, in turn, find the new format and analysis easier to understand. This allows them to hold you and your senior leaders to account for pupils' achievements more effectively.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose. Leaders and governors fulfil statutory requirements when appointing new members of staff. Effective liaison with social care helps to support and protect pupils from harm.

Parents and pupils feel that the school is a safe place to be. Leaders, including governors, ensure that staff receive high-quality training. As a result, staff know how to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse. They are very clear about the school's procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have regarding the safeguarding of pupils. Leaders are tenacious in their work to protect vulnerable pupils.

Pupils spoken to during the inspection stated that bullying and poor behaviour are rare in the school. They have confidence in the staff to deal with problems should they arise. Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's behaviour policy. They value the rewards available for positive behaviour.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Leaders have implemented clear programmes to teach pupils about personal safety. Pupils understand the issues linked to internet safety, fire safety and stranger danger; they feel well supported by staff.

Inspection findings

- Attainment at the end of key stage 2 in reading in 2018 was broadly average at the expected standard. It was above national averages at the higher standard. However, progress had declined over the previous three years. My first line of enquiry, therefore, was to find out what you have done to address this decline in progress. You and your senior leadership team have reviewed the school's approach to how reading is taught. Pupils now gain experience of reading challenging texts. They are responding positively to the raised expectations that your revised teaching approach promotes.
- An important element of this approach is your training of staff. You do this in order to ensure that everyone understands their role in developing pupils' reading. Leaders are continuing to check the quality of teaching. Inspection evidence agrees that teaching is improving over time. This is having a positive impact on pupils' reading achievements.
- Pupils read with fluency and increasing confidence. They read challenging texts and apply a range of reading strategies to understand new words. They have a developing understanding of what they read and can retrieve information from texts. They are able to predict what might happen next in fiction books. They also have a good range of favourite authors.
- My second line of enquiry was to find out more about the effectiveness of teaching in key stage 1 to enable pupils to reach the higher standards, especially in writing. Attainment at the expected standard at the end of key stage 1 in 2018 was above national averages. However, the proportion of pupils reaching greater depth was below the national average. No disadvantaged pupils reached greater depth.
- Consequently, leaders have changed the culture of writing in order to improve teaching and raise expectations. You have implemented a plan of writing styles across the school to help pupils to achieve as they progress through key stages 1 and 2. As a result, Year 6 pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, experiment with a wider vocabulary. They have an increased understanding of sentence structures and punctuation. Older pupils' writing is varied and sufficiently detailed to create atmosphere and imagery.
- The writing, particularly of middle-prior-attaining pupils in key stage 1, lacks the control and accuracy required to reach the greater depth of understanding at the end of Year 2. These pupils, typically, do not have a secure understanding of verb tense, punctuation and spelling. However, they include a wider variety of vocabulary in their writing. They also demonstrate a real stamina for writing, by maintaining the plot in longer pieces of writing. Leaders are now focusing on further raising expectations and the quality of teaching to enable more pupils to reach greater depth.
- I also considered, in my third line of enquiry, what leaders have done to improve teaching and learning in the early years to raise the proportions of children gaining a good level of development, especially boys. Since 2016, the school's results have declined each year. In 2018 they were below the national average.
- The leader of the early years foundation stage has a clear vision to raise aspirations and standards across the Nursery and Reception classes. She has

made significant alterations to the way that teaching and learning are structured, including using themes that will inspire the learning of all children, especially boys. Writing opportunities are available in all areas of the early years classrooms. This is having a positive impact on the children's writing. Books show effective progress over time, particularly in writing.

- Finally, I considered how well leaders have implemented and monitored the curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics. Leaders have used training and the advice from consultants to enhance teaching and their own leadership skills. Most of your subject leaders have a clear understanding of the purpose and intent of their curriculum. They have ensured that subject-specific skills are encouraged and developed through training and sharing good teaching practice. Inspection evidence shows that in geography and art there is clear progression in both teaching and learning. In some subjects, such as geography, leaders' monitoring is well-organised. However, there are some subjects where the monitoring of, and progression in, the curriculum is not as strong. In these subjects pupils' achievement could be higher.
- As a result of some subject leaders' actions, the quality of pupils' work in their subjects is improving. In geography, pupils' books showed a well-developed understanding of different maps and scales. Leaders have developed plans to enable all subject leaders to positively influence the quality of teaching and learning. However, these plans have not had time to have an impact on pupils' achievements.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they further improve teaching and learning in writing, particularly at key stage 1, to increase the proportion of pupils reaching greater depth of understanding
- they continue to develop the leadership of subjects other than English and mathematics to further raise standards in these subjects, by:
 - continuing to raise the subject knowledge of teachers
 - implementing leaders' plans to further develop the teaching of subject-specific skills and knowledge
 - checking the progress and attainment of pupils across the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Shackleton
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, your staff and members of the governing body. I also met with pupils to seek their views about the school. I spoke with a representative of the local authority. I also spoke with pupils informally in the classroom and around school.

We observed teaching and learning together and I scrutinised pupils' writing across key stage 1. I also looked at work in subjects other than English and mathematics alongside subject leaders. I spoke with pupils from key stage 2 about their reading and listened to them read. I also looked at records of learning and assessments from children in both Nursery and Reception classes with the early years leader.

I examined and discussed a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding and improvement priorities. I looked at the school's self-evaluation and assessment information.

I considered the views expressed by parents gathered in the playground before the start of the school day and 74 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I also considered the 21 responses to the staff survey and the 57 responses to the pupil survey.