

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mr Gary Gentle  
Headteacher  
Bilston Church of England Primary School  
Albany Crescent  
Bilston  
West Midlands  
WV14 0HU

Dear Mr Gentle

### **Short inspection of Bilston Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 11 June 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 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.

Classroom visits showed the school to be a harmonious place; pupils spoken with said that they enjoy coming to school and feel respected. They show mature attitudes when discussing their feelings and speak articulately about the values of tolerance and equality. Pupils' conduct around school and their learning attitudes are very positive.

You have led the school purposefully and with determination since the school's last inspection. With the high-quality support that you have received from the local authority, you have developed a cohesive and influential team of senior and middle leaders. Leaders have an accurate picture of what is working well and the things that could be better in the subjects and areas of the school's work they lead. Importantly, middle leaders provide highly valued support and guidance which is helping teachers to develop their skills and improve their practice.

Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's priorities. They hold leaders to account and they are ambitious for the school. Governors are proactive, have formed positive links with school staff and are keen to see the work of the school for themselves. They often visit the school and hold school leaders to account increasingly well for the progress that all pupils make.

You and your staff are determined to prepare pupils well for life in the modern

world by ensuring that the curriculum and activities are well suited to their interests and capabilities. When asked, they were quick to list subjects such as art, music and sport as favourites, together with English and mathematics. Pupils enjoy learning.

At your last inspection, the amount of challenge in work given to most-able pupils was identified as an area for improvement. You have now taken steps to address the weaknesses, but these are in their infancy and the intended impact is yet to be seen across school.

You have improved the leadership of phonics and reading to address pupils' low outcomes in the recent past in the Year 1 phonics screening check. As a result, pupils are now reading and writing words and sentences using their phonic knowledge. Standards have risen in the early years and the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard for reading and writing has improved considerably.

Parents who spoke to the inspector in the playground were very positive about the school. Parents said how happy their children were and how well teachers support them. A number of parents who replied to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, said that how the school deals with behaviour is an area of the school's work that could be improved. You were made aware of these concerns during the inspection.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is an established culture of safeguarding at the school and a clear ethos that everybody is responsible for safeguarding. All of the procedures that leaders have put in place are secure and robust. Leaders make sure concerns are acted upon immediately and any ongoing issues are monitored carefully to make sure that pupils are safe. You ensure that staff receive regular training updates regarding safeguarding.

You know the families of pupils who attend the school very well and are vigilant about their welfare. The school works closely with parents and local agencies when there is a concern about a pupil's welfare. You have escalated concerns where you felt this was necessary to ensure the safety of pupils and their families.

Parents, pupils and staff agree that pupils feel safe. Bullying is rare and is dealt with effectively. Pupils know how to stay safe. They learn about the internet safely and how to avoid the potential dangers of social media sites. Staff maintain high levels of supervision to protect pupils' safety and well-being.

Your systems for monitoring and improving attendance are robust and systematic. Attendance has improved considerably since September because you are working effectively with families to reduce the number of absences.

### **Inspection findings**

- You have developed effective leadership across the school. Your senior team shares your high expectations of all members of the school community. Each member of staff has a passion for their role and is held accountable for their actions.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have continued the process of self-evaluation. You were able to explain clearly the school's many strengths, as well as the priorities for development, including improving the school's phonics outcomes and expectations of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- There have been improvements within the early years. There is a stimulating environment with a range of effective learning opportunities. Adults model precise language and take every opportunity to move children on in their learning. There is a strong focus on developing children's early literacy skills.
- The leader of English has provided more opportunities for pupils to read and write extensively across a range of subjects and topics. There has been a focus on the development of spelling and grammar to improve writing. Pupils' achievements in English continue to improve as a result of strong subject leadership.
- In reading, there is a clear focus on vocabulary and comprehension skills. In writing, technical skills such as punctuation and grammar are taught systematically across school. As a result, pupils are developing their knowledge and skills strongly in reading and write with technical accuracy. However, pupils are not consistently able to connect what they have read to develop cohesion and flair in their own writing.
- Pupils with SEND are not always making expected progress over time because gaps in pupils learning are not fully addressed. The school is in the process of identifying targets for these pupils from their year group curriculum so pupils can be supported to catch up quickly. This has not yet taken place.
- Not enough pupils are reaching the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics because higher order skills are not yet consistently taught across school. You are aware that, at times, the most-able pupils do not have the same guidance and support from adults as the other pupils. This would enable them to make the progress of which they are capable and achieve even more.
- The school's work to reduce the high rates of absence has significantly improved attendance across school. Your focus on individual pupils who you have identified as at risk and the external specialist support you have procured has been highly effective. However, your internal information highlights more needs to be done to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' reading and writing skills are more connected so they are able to use what they have read to produce cohesive pieces of work
- more pupils reach the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics
- pupils with SEND make more rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Khalid Din  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders. We spoke with parents and members of the governing body, including the chair. I also met a representative from the local authority. I spoke with pupils informally at lunchtime and I listened to nine pupils reading. I observed teaching in classes, and looked at pupils' work to consider the quality of learning over time. The school's safeguarding documents were reviewed, including the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks and attendance information. I discussed the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. I spoke with parents in the playground and there were 30 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, to consider. The staff questionnaire was also reviewed, and comments considered.