

5 September 2019

Mr Christian Kelly
Headteacher
Bapchild and Tonge Church of England Primary School
School Lane
Bapchild
Sittingbourne
Kent
ME9 9NL

Dear Mr Kelly

Short inspection of Bapchild and Tonge Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 July 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.

Since your appointment, you have created a strong senior leadership team that shares a clear vision and the determination to provide the best for the pupils. You have secured the confidence of parents and carers in your leadership. A parent wrote: 'The school has hugely improved under the new management team.' Expectations are high. Staff are proud to work at the school and are positive about the leadership. One wrote: 'Staff well-being and workload is well managed and always considered. Leaders look for ways to spread out workload when implementing new procedures as well as ensuring the appropriate training has been put into place.'

You promote the achievement of every pupil within a caring community based on Christian values. A strong sense of community permeates the school, providing care and support for pupils, their families and staff. Personal skills including resilience, self-discipline, honesty, organisation, communication and social skills are actively promoted throughout the school to prepare pupils very well for life beyond school as well as their academic achievement.

You have maintained and built upon the strengths identified at the last inspection and have taken action to address the areas to improve. Pupils' progress in writing has improved and provision in the early years has been a key focus with successful

results. High expectations and actions to address pupils' skills in subjects other than English and mathematics have been particularly successful in some subjects. You acknowledge, however, that there remains work to be done in some of the other foundation subjects. Leadership in the core subjects and other subjects where there has been a school focus is skilled and effective. Actions taken have been from sharp analysis of outcomes and quality of provision and have successfully led to improvements. Leaders are influential, providing support and advice to colleagues and contributing to school improvement. The full impact of the subject leadership of some foundation subjects is not yet fully evident on outcomes or the quality of teaching and learning.

Evaluation of the quality of teaching is robust, efficient and accurate and leaders keep a sharp focus on pupils' progress. If any weaknesses are identified in the quality of teaching, support is provided and improvement is expected. Leaders convincingly articulate and demonstrate where and how their actions have had a positive impact for pupils. There is no complacency. You and your senior leaders are unwavering and relentless in your work to ensure continuous and sustained improvement in the school. Pupils achieve well. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make good progress. Attainment in grammar, punctuation and spelling, which has been a focus for the school, has improved considerably over the past year. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has also improved, with increasing proportions achieving the expectations for their age and the higher standards.

The governing body is relatively new. Governors are working hard to review and refine the governing body's effectiveness in holding leaders to account for the school's performance. Plans are in place to maximise the efficiency of governors' work. Governors have already reviewed their monitoring activity and there are now clear responsibilities which link closely to school development planning.

Pupils are confident, polite and articulate. They are friendly and caring and look out for each other. They are enthusiastic about school and enjoy learning. Pupils behave well during lessons and throughout the school day. Pupils demonstrated their good behaviour and conduct admirably during the day of the inspection. Despite an air of anticipation and excitement for the school fair in the afternoon, pupils were focused and attentive during their lessons in the morning and their conduct during the fair was excellent. Strong and trusting relationships with staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and well-being. Pupils are confident to take risks in learning and know they can learn from their mistakes as they know that their opinions and views will be valued. Year 6 pupils, although sad to leave the school and their teachers, have good attitudes towards moving on to their next

schools. They are well prepared socially, emotionally and academically.

The school environment is welcoming, clean and attractive. Displays are interactive, motivating and inspiring and demonstrate breadth in the curriculum. The school values are visible and very much part of the ethos of the school. Parents are positive about the school and the education their children receive. Although only a relatively small number responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, a much larger proportion of parents responded very positively to the school's own recent survey. One parent wrote that her child 'absolutely loves attending and has made such lovely friends, in the teachers as well as the children. The school does lots of activities that involve parents as well. And we are well informed about our child's day.'

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a clear culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders are fastidious in ensuring that procedures and documentation remain tight during the period of transferring record-keeping to an online system. All records and communication to and from external sources are kept efficiently. Recruitment and vetting checks for new members of staff are carried out meticulously and are fully completed before they take up their appointments. The single central record of these checks is well maintained and fully compliant with statutory requirements.

The designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) are regularly trained. All staff are regularly provided with training and kept up to date with any new developments or requirements. All staff have a clear awareness that it is everyone's responsibility to keep children safe. They are vigilant in doing so. Risk assessments are carried out and checked, in school and for trips out. A rigorous and robust risk assessment was scrutinised for the school fair that took place during the inspection. Pupils, parents and staff agree that the school keeps pupils safe. A parent commented on changes you have made: 'The headteacher has made a difference to the school with extra security and new technology around the school.' Pupils said that they feel safe and well looked after. Pupils are very aware of, and take responsibility for, their own safety. Older pupils are good role models and promote safeguarding well.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to focus on some key areas of the school's work. As well as inspecting safeguarding, we explored: pupils' progress in writing and how well current pupils are achieving in reading, writing and mathematics; whether expectations are high enough in the wider curriculum; and if children are suitably challenged in the early years.

- By the end of Year 6 in 2018, pupils made very strong progress in writing, which was a marked improvement from the previous year. Strong leadership in the subject and a range of effective actions led to pupils' improved progress. Actions included providing many more opportunities for writing across the curriculum, for example in science; observation of outstanding practice in other schools; and training to enhance teachers' skills. Strengths in writing were evident in the books of current pupils. Teachers' assessments of the quality of pupils' writing are validated externally and are accurate.
- Pupils' work shows how teachers' strong subject knowledge and consistent expectations support strengths in pupils' learning and improved outcomes. The consistent use of probing questioning supports pupils' learning very well. Pupils enjoy the quality texts that are used as starting points for linking learning across the curriculum. Pupils are introduced to challenging texts and develop strong comprehension skills as well as a real enjoyment and thirst for reading. Pupils are increasingly competent in their mathematical reasoning skills and there is less of a focus on simply getting right or wrong answers. Again, strong leadership, appropriate training and external expertise have all played a significant part in strengthening outcomes in mathematics.
- The school values are very much part of the ethos of the school and underpin the vision and the aims for its pupils. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is planned effectively to motivate and inspire pupils and to meet their needs as well as their interests. There is a shared view of the aims of the curriculum and agreed expectations for how it should be delivered. For example, teachers provide quality texts, rich questioning and enquiry-based learning. Your curriculum review led to a focus on specific foundation subjects and leaders' work has ensured consistency in teaching and learning and progression in skills, knowledge and understanding. You acknowledge, however, that some subjects require further development.
- There have been considerable and significant changes in the early years. A new, experienced teacher was appointed in March 2018. Leaders have been determined to strengthen the provision. You have instigated a wealth of training activities, including visits to and from other schools and the expertise of other leaders, to support improvement. There has been robust discussion, careful action planning and effective monitoring and evaluation of the provision.
- Notably, last year saw the classroom gutted and redesigned into zones, reflected in the planning of provision and learning opportunities. The zoned areas are well resourced and children are clear about what they are doing and learning. The environment, inside and outside, is language-rich, with lots of labels, books, posters and instructions. Leaders scrutinise planning to ensure that there is appropriate challenge for learners. Staff make accurate assessments to check children's learning. Children are fully engaged and their enjoyment is evident. They are safe and happy and demonstrate a good degree of independence and responsibility. Children cooperate, share and work together well. Further development of the extended outdoor provision is planned over the summer.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue with the further development of the identified foundation subjects
- the work of subject leaders in the foundation subjects has an even greater impact on pupils' outcomes.

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

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and your assistant headteachers and your English leader. I met with the chair of the governing body and two other governors. I had a telephone conversation with the local authority adviser. During the visits made to classes, I spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at their work. I spoke to pupils around the school, in the playground and during the school fair and asked them for their views on the school.

I reviewed the school's website and sampled a range of documents and records, including your school improvement plan and evaluation of the school's effectiveness, information about pupils' achievement and documents relating to safeguarding. I took account of 21 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 15 free-text comments and spoke to some parents at the school fair. I considered 26 responses to the staff survey and 166 responses to the pupil survey.