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Ms Clacy
Headteacher
Old Church Church of England C Primary School
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Dear Ms Clacy

Short inspection of Old Church Church of England C Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 October 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 April 2014.

This school continues to be good.

Along with other school leaders, you have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. School leaders are determined that the pupils at your school will succeed. You provide a rich variety of experiences for pupils that help them to be excited about learning. Parents and pupils appreciate your hard work to improve the school. Information gathered from parents', pupils' and staff's views of this school are positive about the positive ethos you have created. As one parent told me: 'It's a caring place.'

Pupils spoke confidently and positively about the school. They behave well and feel that there is mutual respect for all. Enrichment afternoons provide opportunities for pupils to apply their skills. Pupils talked enthusiastically about woodwork and cookery, which provide additional real-life application of their basic skills. The range of visitors, educational visits and programmes that you organise for pupils has enlivened the curriculum. These experiences support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education effectively.

You have addressed the areas for improvement at the previous inspection. Teachers are providing pupils with an appropriate level of challenge. By the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard in reading is in line with the national average. Provisional results for 2018 show that more pupils are achieving the higher standard in writing and mathematics. However, weaknesses in mathematics teaching are preventing a greater proportion from reaching the higher standard. This is an area that requires further improvement.

You have high expectations of staff and have invested in developing leaders at all levels. Staff spoke positively about the training they receive to help them be effective teachers and leaders. You hold teachers to account through the checks that you carry out on what is happening in classrooms. Consequently, leaders know the strengths and areas to improve in the school. You have introduced core skills for the wider curriculum and you have checked that these skills are being taught through the topics. However, further work is needed to ensure that these core skills are taught well enough by teachers.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have invested in providing additional school-based support for vulnerable pupils. You challenge decisions about pupil care and, consequently, pupils are well looked after.

Staff are trained appropriately to understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. You and your team focus on getting help for those who need it and your parent support adviser provides good support for pupils. Governors are aware of the challenges facing the school and you know the specific safeguarding concerns facing the community. Your curriculum supports pupils in learning how to keep themselves safe. Pupils told me that they feel safe in school. Staff feel supported by leaders when they face challenges in supporting pupils. Relationships are strong in the school and are built on a culture of mutual trust and respect. This means that pupils get the help that they need at the right time.

Inspection findings

- You and the leadership team have established an effective assessment system that allows you to track the progress that pupils are making in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders use this information to help pupils catch up, and the actions taken are leading to good progress. For example, more pupils are now reaching the higher standard in reading.
- You engage the help of a number of leaders both inside your school and externally to help you evaluate the work of the school. This means that you have a good understanding of what is working well. Consequently, the plans for improvement are focused on the right priorities. For example, you have identified a focus on mathematics teaching to help more pupils reach the higher standard.
- Your ambition for pupils to attain well is strong. Pupils want to come to school and attendance is good. There has been an improvement in overall attendance and a reduction in those who are persistently absent. This improvement has been maintained because pupils do not want to miss out on the opportunities provided in subjects such as art and music where pupils have the opportunity to work with specialists to attain recognised music awards.
- You have devised a set of key skills to be reinforced through your wider curriculum. Leaders have ensured that these key skills are embedded in lesson

planning. However, as yet the teaching of these key skills has not been evaluated in terms of the progress pupils are making.

- Pupils' personal development and their understanding of how to keep themselves safe is well developed through the curriculum. You have considered the needs of your community and provided opportunities that help pupils to develop resilience. One pupil said: 'The opportunities we get give us confidence.' This is helping pupils to be ready for the next stage in their education.
- You and the leadership team have introduced a new approach to the teaching of mathematics. You have a clear policy in place which shows how pupils' mathematics skills are developed across the school. Pupils are beginning to use a wide range of practical equipment to support their learning. This work is helping pupils make stronger progress, but it is not yet embedded across the school.
- The staff encourage pupils to use the language of mathematics to help them explain their reasoning. Through our joint lesson observations, we saw some effective practice, but also some weaker practice. Consequently, some pupils developed misconceptions about place value. The checks that you make on the quality of teaching show that you have identified this as an area to develop in your school.
- The changes that you have made to the curriculum and to assessment have had a beneficial impact on the progress that pupils are making across the school. In 2018, provisional information shows that the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard at the end of key stage 2 has improved. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who have reached the higher standard in writing at the end of key stage 2 also increased. In key stage 1 and at the end of Reception year, provisional information shows that pupil attainment remains below the national average. However, the attainment reflects good progress from pupils' starting points.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all teachers follow the school's strategy for the teaching of mathematics and use specific mathematical vocabulary and practical equipment
- development of the core skills within the school's curriculum continues to raise standards for all pupils while further preparing them for life outside school.

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 Walsall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Richard Kentish
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and other leaders. I also met with seven governors. I spoke to pupils informally and formally. I made short visits to seven lessons with you and looked at a range of pupils' books. I spoke to parents and carers at the start of the day and considered 15 free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also considered the responses from Ofsted's online pupil and staff questionnaires alongside other surveys that you had completed.

I scrutinised various documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan and the documents that you use to check the quality of teaching. You shared with me your most recent assessments of pupils' attainment and progress. We discussed the national test results and the results of assessments undertaken by pupils in 2017 and 2018. I also looked at the school's published information on the website, as well as minutes of governing body meetings and information about attendance, behaviour and safety.