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10 June 2019

Mrs Sharon Roberts
Headteacher
St Peter's Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mrs Roberts

Short inspection of St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 May 2019 with Marcia Northeast, Ofsted Inspector, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Since the previous inspection, the school has become a member of the Lighthouse Schools Partnership. Pupil numbers have increased year on year, testimony to the school's popularity within the local community. In 2017, the school was awarded teaching school status and has more recently become a designated English hub. St Peter's has teachers with a wealth of specialist knowledge in the teaching of reading and phonics. This is shared, including with other schools, to promote good practice through its outreach work.

The school's vision, 'excellence as standard', underpins your work. You and your staff are uncompromising in your ambition for all pupils. You have created a learning culture that enables all pupils and staff to excel. Leaders and governors place a priority on high-quality professional development and educational research to encourage, support and challenge teachers' improvement. Consequently, the capacity to drive school improvement is exceptionally strong.

Leaders' focus on improving outcomes has had a considerable impact on raising pupils' achievement across the school. For example, pupils attain highly in key stage 1. Furthermore, most pupils in key stage 2 achieve well in English and mathematics. Current pupils are making substantial and sustained progress from their different starting points and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. However, this is yet to be fully reflected in the end-of-key-stage-2 national assessments and remains a priority for leaders.

Trustees set a clear vision, ethos and strategic direction for the school. The local governing body has a precise understanding of its delegated responsibilities. Governors play an integral role in monitoring, scrutinising and influencing school improvement actions. They have a deep and accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness and provide a suitable balance of challenge and support.

Being part of the trust has strengthened the school's capacity. Consequently, the strengths from your predecessor school have been retained. This has also enabled leaders to address weaknesses identified at the last inspection. For example, middle leaders have played an important role in raising standards across the curriculum. They receive appropriate training to ensure that they fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively.

You are extremely well supported by an enthusiastic and hardworking team that is committed to improving outcomes for all pupils, especially the disadvantaged. They share your high expectations for teaching and learning. All staff who responded to the survey said that they enjoy working at this school and are proud to be a staff member. They agree unanimously that you support them well and take their workload into account to avoid placing unnecessary burdens on them. Comments typical of those expressed by staff included, 'Leaders are always conscious of workload impact when considering new initiatives.'

Almost all parents who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said that they would recommend the school to another parent. Parental feedback is overwhelmingly positive about the efforts made by staff to ensure that children are happy, feel safe and are well looked after. Parents say that staff value and respect all children. For example, a comment typical of many, was, 'The school is very inclusive and makes sure that every child has the opportunities that their peers have.'

Pupils are exceptionally well behaved, confident and self-assured. They thrive on the challenges presented to them in lessons. Their excellent attitudes to learning have a significant impact on their strong achievement over time. Pupils share and discuss their work with pride.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have created a culture of vigilance where pupils' safety and well-being are of paramount importance. Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils say that when they have any

concerns, staff listen and support them well. They feel safe and well looked after at school. Pupils demonstrate a strong grasp of how they may keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including online, and how to respond to incidents of bullying.

You ensure that staff have the necessary skills and expertise to keep pupils safe. As a result, they understand and carry out safeguarding policies and procedures effectively. They have the required knowledge to identify the signs of potential abuse quickly. Leaders know the pupils and their families well and ensure that they provide support when needed. Staff recruitment is well planned, and all essential checks are carried out.

Pupils' attendance at school has been consistently above the national average in recent years. Leaders are taking appropriate action to improve the attendance of pupils entitled to free school meals and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Inspection findings

- We examined leaders' actions to ensure that pupils, including the disadvantaged, achieve well in writing in key stage 2. In the 2018 national curriculum assessments disadvantaged pupils' attainment in the English, grammar, punctuation and spelling test was below that of their non-disadvantaged peers nationally.
- Leaders have put a range of measures in place to improve pupils' achievement in writing. Pupils are regularly exposed to rich and varied language in the texts selected to support their learning. Consequently, current pupils, including the disadvantaged, are making substantial and sustained progress in writing.
- Teachers and teaching assistants check pupils' understanding of new writing strategies effectively, offering clearly directed support. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils demonstrate an accurate command of a wide range of writing devices and techniques to support their spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- We also focused on evaluating leaders' actions in ensuring that pupils in key stage 2, including the most able and the disadvantaged, make strong progress in mathematics. Leaders have implemented a range of training initiatives to provide staff with the expertise to deliver high-quality teaching in this subject. As a result, excellent practice in the teaching of mathematics is consistent across the school. Teachers use a range of approaches to ensure that all pupils secure the knowledge and skills they need.
- Teachers are effective at guiding pupils, including the disadvantaged, to address gaps in their mathematical knowledge and understanding. Teachers are highly effective in their questioning of pupils to help them secure their knowledge of new concepts. Pupils are rapidly improving their conceptual fluency and accuracy, giving them the confidence to apply their knowledge and skills in different contexts.

- The most able mathematicians are routinely challenged in their learning through their exposure to sophisticated problems. Consequently, they demonstrate the resilience and perseverance to tackle complex work and deepen their understanding. However, pupils developing mastery of mathematical thinking and reasoning is less evident in their written work.
- Finally, we explored how teachers use assessment information to ensure that children achieve well in early reading and mathematics. Teachers in the early years demonstrate a precise understanding of the needs of the children. Thorough assessments ensure that children's starting points in Reception are secure and used effectively to plan their learning. Consequently, children make substantial progress in reading and mathematics and are exceptionally well prepared for their move into Year 1.
- Teachers set high expectations in their modelling of phonics and use accurate assessments to check on pupils' progress. They provide pupils with the necessary support to excel in early reading. As a result, pupils achieve highly in the national phonics screening check in Year 1 and can apply this knowledge successfully to support the accuracy of their writing.
- Teachers in key stage 1 use robust assessments in mathematics to ensure that their teaching builds on what pupils know, can do and understand. As a result, in 2018 attainment in key stage 1 mathematics was in the highest 10% of schools nationally.
- The effectiveness of the school's use of and approach to assessment has been recognised by trustees. As a result, St Peter's leads best practice in assessment across all primary schools within the trust.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils further develop their thinking and reasoning in mathematics
- pupils' substantial and sustained progress in reading, writing and mathematics is maintained to be fully reflected in national assessments at the end of key stage 2.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Bath and Wells, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Neil Swait
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke with you, senior and middle leaders, four representatives from the local governing body and representatives from the board of trustees, including the chair and the chief executive officer. I also spoke with the trust's director for school improvement. The inspection team was accompanied by leaders to observe pupils' learning in lessons and gather their views about their work. We scrutinised pupils' mathematics and English books and heard pupils read.

I considered a range of documentary evidence, including: the school's self-evaluation form; development plans; external reports of the school's effectiveness; school performance information; attendance records; leaders' monitoring and evaluation records; governors' minutes; and safeguarding documentation.

In addition, I took account of 121 responses to Parent View; 38 responses to the staff survey; and 88 responses to the pupil survey. We also gathered the views of staff, pupils and parents through discussions during the inspection.