

1 October 2018

Mrs Carol Meakins
Headteacher
St Andrew's Church of England Infants School
Winchelsea Road
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN22 7PP

Dear Mrs Meakins

Short inspection of St Andrew's Church of England Infants School

Following my visit to the school on 18 September 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 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 becoming headteacher at the school, you have made clear your high expectations and uncompromising drive for school improvement. You have inspired your staff, who share your motivation and commitment. They feel respected by you and are proud to be members of the school community. Working with your deputy, you have ensured that the school's self-evaluation is accurate. Your action plan clearly identifies what is working well and what could be even better. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they share your ambitious aims. They provide school leaders with effective challenge and useful guidance.

You and your staff have created a learning environment that is nurturing, caring and friendly. Your school vision to 'learn together in friendship' permeates throughout the school. Pupils say that 'everyone is kind and they are all friends'. They are polite and courteous to each other, and to adults and visitors to the school. In class, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are keen to learn new knowledge and skills and display positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their curriculum and enjoy the many opportunities that they get to visit places, linked to their learning in school. One child talked animatedly about their visit to Abbot Wood, particularly enjoying the 'beautiful bluebells' and handling the caterpillars.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Many parents with whom I spoke commented that you are always on the playground to greet them in the

morning. This makes them feel welcomed as a part of the school community. Many parents took the opportunity to share their written personal views about the school. All parents were confident that their children are flourishing at the school. One parent commented that the staff are 'deeply passionate about giving children in the school the best start in life'. All parents who completed the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, felt that you lead and manage the school well and that you and your staff are quick to respond to any concerns they may have. All reported that they would recommend the school to other parents.

School leaders have maintained the many strengths that were identified in the previous inspection. One area for development was to further improve the quality of teaching across the school. For the last two years, the number of children in the early years who achieved a good level of development has been above the national average. Similarly, for a number of years, more pupils than previously in Year 2 achieved the expectation for their age in reading, writing and mathematics, compared to that of other pupils nationally. Leaders were also asked to improve the support for disadvantaged pupils. During the inspection, I observed teachers and support staff providing high-quality learning opportunities for disadvantaged pupils.

You are keen to continue to develop all aspects of the school. You are currently focusing on improving the teaching of phonics and writing in the early years and key stage 1. You are also working on developing mastery in mathematics, so that more pupils than previously exceed the expectations for their age in Year 2. You acknowledge that in key stage 1, teachers do not always provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils, including for the most able disadvantaged pupils, in reading and writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and thorough. You keep safeguarding under constant review and you lead training for staff and governors annually. This ensures that all members of your team are well informed and understand the role that they play in keeping pupils safe. Policies and procedures provide clear guidance for all staff, including arrangements for reporting concerns. This allows you to quickly make referrals to other agencies, when it becomes necessary. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and regularly check the quality of safeguarding processes, including the vetting and recruitment of adults who work in the school. The school's records show that all checks on staff, governors and volunteers are completed thoroughly.

Pupils report that they feel safe and happy at school. They explain the many ways in which the school teaches them to stay safe, through lessons about e-safety, stranger danger and road safety. Pupils feel confident to talk to an adult in the school if they have worries or concerns. They feel that behaviour is good during learning time and at playtime.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I evaluated: the impact of leaders' actions on improving attendance; how well teaching ensures that disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make the same good progress as their classmates; and what actions leaders are taking to ensure that all pupils are sufficiently challenged, including the most able pupils, so that more pupils meet the phonics expectations in Year 1.
- Attendance is improving year on year. This is because you work hard to engage with families to encourage regular attendance and punctuality. You are quick to seek advice from other agencies when you are concerned that pupils' absence is affecting their learning. You use a range of highly effective strategies to encourage pupils to attend school regularly.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils. You ensure that teachers' planning accurately targets the needs of this group of pupils. Additional adults in each class provide high-quality support, encouraging pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding independently. The wide range of interventions in place for disadvantaged pupils provides useful opportunities for them to recall and practise their skills. As a result, the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils in the school is diminishing. You monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils regularly. School assessment information indicates that most disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points. However, teachers do not always provide sufficient challenge for the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- You accurately identified that some pupils in key stage 1 do not make fast enough progress in phonics. In 2017, a much lower proportion of pupils than that nationally achieved as expected in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Together, we observed the pupils' learning in phonics in the early years and in key stage 1. In the early years, teachers' planning provided a wide range of exciting and interesting activities to develop children's phonics skills and understanding. Children were appropriately challenged at all ability levels. As a result, children were engaged in their learning and made good progress. In key stage 1, pupils were also keen to learn and applied themselves diligently to the tasks presented to them. However, the most able pupils were not always sufficiently challenged. As a result, this group of pupils did not always make the progress of which they were capable.
- Together, we evaluated a range of pupils' cross-curricular writing books. We identified that teachers' expectations for the most able pupils were not always high enough. Some teachers are not routinely planning challenging tasks that deepen pupils' thinking and extend their understanding. The phonics leader has already implemented a range of strategies to improve the quality of phonics teaching in the school. All staff have received high-quality training, which has started to bring about some improvement. You have accurately identified that more pupils than currently should meet and exceed the expectations for their age in reading, and particularly writing, at the end of Year 2. Your action plan for

school improvement rightly identifies challenge for the most able pupils as a key area for further development.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils in key stage 1 make faster progress in phonics so that more pupils meet the expected threshold in the Year 1 phonics screening check
- teachers provide greater challenge for the most able pupils in key stage 1 so that more pupils achieve the higher standards in reading and writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Luisa Gould
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and a group of governors. I had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. We discussed and agreed the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. Together, we observed learning in the early years and key stage 1. We evaluated a range of cross-curricular workbooks. We discussed the school's assessment information about outcomes for current pupils, your plans for improvement and your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I considered 50 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and took account of parents' free-text comments. I analysed a range of school documentation, including policies and procedures, and minutes from governing body meetings. I met with your office secretary to review safer recruitment practices. I checked other safeguarding documentation and procedures.