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Barry Grace
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Dear Mr Grace

Short inspection of Westcott Church of England School

Following my visit to the school on 17 January 2017, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have established a culture in which pupils really want to come to school and are keen to learn. Your detailed knowledge of every pupil in your school, and your ambitions for each one, support pupils to achieve their best. The large majority of staff, pupils and parents who spoke with me or completed the online questionnaire during this inspection are confident in your leadership. Without exception, they appreciate the safe, nurturing environment the school provides. The school has a key role in the local area's Christian community and pupils and parents value the Christian ethos.

At the time of the last inspection, the inspector identified weaknesses in the quality of pupils' writing. Your thorough analysis of pupils' progress in writing has informed the effective action you have taken to improve this aspect of teaching, including determining priorities for teachers' professional development. You have also revised the curriculum to create more opportunities for pupils to discuss and edit their written work. As a result, pupils currently in school are making good progress in writing and the presentation of their work has improved. Leaders remain committed to giving pupils the tools they need to be the best writers that they can be, and this continues to be a focus in improving teaching and learning.

The previous inspection identified the need for leaders to be more rigorous in checking the quality of teaching and the progress of key groups of pupils. You have

addressed this well and monitor accurately the quality of teaching and pupils' learning, including that of key groups. When you have identified weaknesses in teaching you have quickly put in appropriate and effective support. This has resulted in teaching improving rapidly and pupils being enabled to catch up.

Leaders have accurately identified areas where the school could do better and are making the necessary improvements, including developing teaching to secure more rapid progress and higher achievement for pupils. Since the last inspection, you have worked tirelessly with governors to manage an expanding school, while tackling the underperformance of some staff. You wasted no time in ensuring that appropriate support was in place for those staff, and held them rigorously to account. However, this resulted in a period of instability and staff turnover. Following consultation with governors, this has resulted in your decision to teach part time. This has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, it has limited the time you can spend leading the school, including leading improvements in teaching. You and governors are taking appropriate steps to appoint permanent staff and are focusing on developing teachers' leadership skills so that they can lead the continual development of teaching and learning.

A small minority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire are dissatisfied with the progress their children make and want to receive better information about their children's learning. You and the governors recognise this, but further work needs to be done to address these concerns.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is effective. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Rigorous systems are in place to support good practice. Consequently, staff are clear about what is required of them to keep pupils safe. As the designated safeguarding lead, you ensure that all safeguarding checks are made. The safeguarding governor scrutinises the effectiveness of the school's systems. Staff, including those new to school, are well trained in safeguarding and child protection procedures. Frequent updates ensure that staff and governors are kept up to date.

Parents who spoke to me or completed the online questionnaire say they know that the school cares for and nurtures their children and that leaders will go the extra mile to ensure everyone is secure. Staff are vigilant and pupils tell me that they feel safe and know who to go to if they have any concerns. You and your team work actively with families and other agencies to ensure that any safeguarding issues are given the appropriate priority and attention. You are not afraid to challenge decisions made by other professionals, when they are not in the best interests of the pupil.

Inspection findings

- Pupils currently in key stage 1 and in key stage 2 are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. This shows a significant improvement on 2016 key stage 1 and key stage 2 outcomes. The older pupils I

spoke to enjoy lessons and said that more challenging work was helping them to be better learners.

- You have established a coherent tracking system, informed by accurate and moderated teachers' assessments, to monitor the progress of pupils and analyse outcomes for key groups. This school tracking information, cross-referenced with an analysis of pupils' books, provides clear evidence of good progress in writing and mathematics.
- You monitor rigorously the quality of teaching and learning using a range of effective strategies. You then take purposeful action to improve the outcomes for pupils, including those who are at risk of underachievement. For example, the youngest children are benefiting from a larger learning environment set up with exciting resources and challenges to support their learning. The adults working with these children provide high-quality monitoring and careful questioning to move learning forward.
- Pupils read well and are making good progress, with more Year 1 pupils on track to achieve the national standard for phonics in 2017. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are receiving additional support, which ensures that, if they do not reach the expected standard by the end of Year 1, they will reach it by the end of Year 2.
- Similarly, leaders have worked effectively with staff to ensure that the very small number of pupils in receipt of free school meals receive equally effective tailored support. Current pupils receiving this support are making accelerated progress, particularly in mathematics at key stage 2.
- More of the most able pupils are making good progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics, but too few of them are making accelerated progress. You have recognised this and have effective plans in place to provide professional development for teachers to help them to challenge the most able pupils more effectively.
- While the number of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year in 2016 was close to the national average, current Reception pupils are on track to achieve better outcomes.
- The overall attendance of pupils is good. The arrangements you have in place to track attendance and support families are strong. However, in 2016 the proportion of pupils who were persistently absent from school was above the national average. You identified this early, liaised with outside agencies and supported the families well. As a result, since September 2016 persistent absence has reduced and the attendance of all pupils has improved significantly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- increase the leadership capacity of the school so that teachers are driving improvements in teaching and learning to accelerate pupils' progress further in reading, writing and mathematics

- improve communication with parents so that they have a better understanding of their child's learning, the progress that they make and the actions teachers are taking to ensure pupils achieve well.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Varnom
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, your key stage 2 leader, five governors, and representatives from the local authority and the diocese. I read the 34 responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and spoke to eight parents as they brought their children to school. I visited all classrooms with you and closely scrutinised pupils' books while referring to pupils' individual assessment information. I heard pupils read and met formally with a group of pupils to gather their views about the school. In addition, we considered a range of documents, including the leaders' self-evaluation of the school, safeguarding records and policies and the school's monitoring records. The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.