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Mrs Mary Robinson
St Edward's Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mrs Robinson

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

Following my visit to the school on 31 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 June 2012.

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 successfully created a culture where staff, pupils and governors support each other in their mission to provide the best for pupils. Everyone is keen to learn, determined to improve and excited about the challenges ahead. You have a good understanding of the school's strengths. You and your governors have identified the right priorities for St Edward's future development.

St Edward's is a very happy, nurturing and secure place to learn. Pupils appreciate this very much indeed. Pupils told me that 'there's so much good stuff, it will take a while to tell you'. Parents support the school well. Most parents are very satisfied with the school's care and the quality of teaching.

Pupils are unanimous in saying that behaviour is good. Pupils like the rewards and incentives, including extra reading for the older pupils. Pupils say that the sanctions work well and 'people listen if they get a warning'. Pupils are exceptionally polite and respectful towards each other and towards adults. Pupils explained to me that 'they don't just teach you maths; they teach you friendship and manners.' St Edward's has a very well established and inclusive culture. At playtime, I watched a group of older pupils making playtime fun, exciting and safe for a much younger child who needed some special help to join in at playtimes.

The single recommendation in the last inspection report was to improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in writing. Since then, standards in writing have risen across all key stages. In 2016, standards were above the national average at the expected and higher standard in key stage 1 and also above the national average in the early years. Pupils' writing books from across the school show that staff have much higher expectations of writing, not only in English but also in different subjects. As a result, pupils regularly produce longer, better constructed and more accurate writing, including explanations of science experiments and accounts of historical events. The teaching of grammar and punctuation is now a strength in upper key stage 2. Consequently, pupils are making strong progress and developing a good understanding of grammar and more advanced punctuation. More work is still needed to embed the national curriculum expectations of grammar and punctuation in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2. Plans are in place to make more rigorous checks on the quality of provision and pupil outcomes in science, and also other subjects across the curriculum, so that these are done as well as the checks made in English and mathematics.

The number of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the early years has been improved successfully since the last inspection. More could be done to enhance the learning environment, to promote effective independent learning and to ensure that more children achieve their potential to exceed the early learning goals.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team place a high emphasis on ensuring that pupils are safe in school.

When new staff are appointed you make rigorous checks on references and qualifications. Staff and governors are well trained so they are kept up to date with the most recent safeguarding guidance. Staff understand exactly what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Governors take their duties around safeguarding very seriously. The governor with responsibility for this area makes regular visits to the school to check that policies are working well.

Pupils and parents are rightly very confident that St Edward's is a safe place. Pupils are well supervised in the playground. Pupils say 'there's hardly any bullying' and if it happens 'the teachers sort it out'. Your staff team help pupils to develop a strong sense of responsibility. Pupils explained to me how they have confidence to speak up if 'there is something wrong happening'. Pupils also told me how they learn to keep themselves safe. All pupils knew the Childline telephone number and when it should be used.

Inspection findings

- Central to the improvement in writing has been your work to make accurate assessments and use these to plan teaching. You have provided teachers with very clear guidance about the new national curriculum's higher expectations for each year group. Teachers are using this guidance well, along with assessments,

to pinpoint the gaps in pupils' knowledge. This is most successful where teachers then plan lessons to fill these gaps. For example, I observed Year 5 pupils finding adverbial phrases in their class story book, 'Cosmic', and then using the adverbial phrases in their own writing. Pupils' books and assessment information show that the teacher's very good knowledge of the Year 5 and 6 requirements for grammar is helping pupils to make strong progress in relation to the Year 5 age-related expectations. The very strong teacher knowledge of grammar and punctuation seen in upper key stage 2 is not quite as secure in the lower part of key stage 2 and in key stage 1. You have identified this and have plans in place to strengthen this area.

- Teachers use assessment information well to plan catch-up sessions for pupils who are behind age-related expectations. Evidence in pupils' workbooks shows that these extra sessions are enabling pupils to make better progress and to catch up with their peers.
- You have rightly recognised the need to strengthen the curriculum because of the changes in the national curriculum and because the school will be providing for Year 6 pupils in September 2017. While you have well established leadership in the early years and English, the subject leaders for other areas, including science, geography and history, are new to the responsibility. You are giving these leaders clear guidance, so they have made a good start. As a result, these leaders have ensured that the teaching offered matches the requirements of the curriculum. You and your new subject leaders have correctly identified that the next step is making closer checks on the standards of pupils' work and ensuring that pupils are making good progress from their different starting points.
- Since the last inspection, the early years leader has ensured that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has improved to just above the national average. Writing is now a strength of this key stage because staff have higher expectations of children. During the inspection, I saw a teacher-led group where children used spelling, punctuation and handwriting skills to write simple sentences about their visit to the planetarium during the 'Science Wonder Day'.
- The most able early years children are challenged and achieve well in adult-led sessions. However, these children do not have sufficient challenging activities that stretch them to apply their learning during independent play activities. You recognise that the early years environment does not reflect the same high standards seen across the rest of the school and are keen to make this improvement.
- Governors are highly committed and bring very valuable skills to the school's senior leadership team. Since the last inspection, governors have taken a more strategic and focused approach to their work. They make regular checks to ensure that statutory responsibilities are being met and the school is making good progress in school improvement priority areas. As a result, governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Governors value and protect the school's very inclusive ethos, based on the values of respect, kindness and love. Governors are fully committed to ensuring that the curriculum includes even more systematic work to further develop pupils'

understanding of protected characteristics.

- Governors, staff and pupils are excited about the changes next year because pupils will stay on after Year 5. Governors and senior leaders are making appropriate plans to support this change. The plans include closer working with other schools to secure teachers' understanding of the age-related expectations for the end of key stage 2 and also to ensure that teachers' assessments are accurate.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- The teaching of grammar and punctuation in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2 is improved further so that it is as effective as in upper key stage 2.
- There is regular challenge in the early years for the most able children to apply learning during independent play and to exceed the early learning goals.
- The early years provision is reviewed so that its environment reflects the high standards of presentation seen around the rest of the school.
- Leaders' monitoring of provision and outcomes in science and foundation subjects is as effective as the work in English and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Carol Smith
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, your senior leaders, members of the governing body, and science, history and geography subject leaders. We visited classrooms in all key stages. I reviewed samples of work for different ability groups of pupils from all key stages. I looked at assessment information and I heard pupils read.

I observed behaviour around the school and at playtime. I talked to groups of pupils at playtime and also more formally in a pupil discussion group. I reviewed a range of documentation, including policies, safeguarding records, the school self-evaluation document, the school improvement plan and governing body documents.

I took into account 54 responses on Parent View, together with 49 parent

comments made on Ofsted's free-text facility. In addition, I spoke to some parents informally at the start of the school day. I also considered the views of staff and pupils through 17 pupil and six staff responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.