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Mrs Deborah Dix
Headteacher
Oldbury on Severn Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mrs Dix

Short inspection of Oldbury on Severn Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 June 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 May 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 introduced a new curriculum, which is raising expectations of pupils and staff. Teaching staff are fully on board and, as a result, standards are improving. You have experienced higher levels of pupils joining the school during key stage 2. You have been swift to assess what these pupils know, understand and can do, from which you have developed learning programmes that meet their needs and ensure that they make good progress. Interventions for these pupils have been effective in helping them to reach the expectations for their age.

Pupils arrive at school with a bounce in their step. All were keen to speak with me to tell me about the aspects of school that they particularly enjoy.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to improve pupils' writing. This has been, and continues to be, an ongoing priority in the school. While there have been improvements, you are keen to continue to raise standards in pupils' writing and rightly have shifted the emphasis this year to improving pupils' spelling and punctuation. You were also tasked with increasing pupils' attendance. Over the last four years, attendance has improved and for the last two years has been slightly below the national average. It has and continues to be at this level principally due to parents who arrange holidays during term time.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that your own safeguarding training and that of the staff is up to date, including training about radicalisation and extremism, the risks that children face from sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. Staff are clear about how to report any concerns should they have any and you are clear, in your role as the designated safeguarding lead, how to refer cases to the local authority.

Staff know the pupils and their families very well. As a result, they are quick to pick up on any issues that concern pupils and are able to support them appropriately. Pupils know whom they can talk to if they are worried and are confident that actions would be taken to resolve any matters.

You have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and maintain accurate records. While governors carry out their duties, there is room for development so that they can increase the rigour of their work.

Inspection findings

At the start of the inspection, we agreed the areas that this short inspection would focus on. These included the quality of pupils' writing, the progress that the most able pupils in key stage 1 are making, the proficiency with which the younger pupils read and use their phonic knowledge and the attendance of pupils.

- Since the previous inspection, pupils in key stage 1 have not consistently met the standard expected in writing by the end of Year 2, and children in Reception have achieved least well in writing. In addition, very few pupils have shown the skills and understanding to be able to write at the higher standards in recent years. You have led a concentrated effort to improve the teaching of writing in all year groups. Pupils are now writing at greater length and can use a variety of literary techniques to enhance their writing. For example, in Years 3 and 4, pupils were confident in the use of alliteration to add interest when they were re-telling a story. Across all year groups, pupils have the opportunity to write in a variety of styles. The current focus on improving pupils' accuracy in spelling is in its infancy and is critical if pupils are to achieve their very best. Nevertheless, in all year groups, pupils are making good progress and an increasing number are now working at the higher standard. You recognise that there is more work to do to ensure that pupils are consistently using the correct spellings and are accurate in their punctuation. We also identified that the quality of pupils' writing in their topic books was not as strong as in their literacy books. While governors monitor pupil progress information, they do not have the depth of understanding to probe deeply on the quality of learning.
- My second focus was on the progress that the most able pupils in key stage 1 make. In the past, the number of children working at greater depth was very low, especially in reading and mathematics. Teachers are aware of the most able pupils in their classes and are setting appropriately challenging work. As a result, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are able to use tenses appropriately and include adjectives to add colour to their writing. In their mathematics, they are confident

in recognising number bonds and are able to apply their mathematical reasoning when solving more challenging problems. In reading, writing and mathematics, the most able pupils are making good progress. Their work in other aspects of the curriculum is good but not to the same standard as in English and mathematics. Added to this, the information on the school's website about the curriculum and the standards expected for each year group are not sufficiently detailed to allow parents to help their children in their learning.

- The third area we explored was the extent to which you have been successful in improving boys' phonic knowledge and reading skills in the early years and Year 1. In 2015 and 2016, boys did not achieve as well as girls in the phonics screening check taken at the end of Year 1. Pupils in Reception read well. They recognise the letters and the sounds they can make and use this when they are working out how to say unfamiliar words. In Year 1, pupils read well considering their starting points. Pupils from both year groups are accurate in their reading and have a good understanding of the story they are reading. Consequently, the boys are making good progress in their reading.
- Finally, I reviewed pupils' attendance. At the time of the previous inspection, attendance was well below the national average. You, supported by governors, have actively challenged parents to improve their child's attendance. As a result, attendance has improved and is now broadly in line with the national levels. However, too many parents still take their child on family holidays during term time. Governors have not given sufficient attention to overcoming this.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers plan learning that develops pupils' writing, and particularly their spelling and punctuation, in lessons other than English
- the school's website is further developed to raise parents' understanding of the curriculum and the standards expected for their children, so that they may best support their children
- governors develop their knowledge and understanding so that they may take an increasingly evaluative role in school improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Iain Freeland
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, you joined me in observing learning and looking at pupils' work. I spoke with pupils in lessons and at lunchtime. I met with two governors. I also spoke with a representative of the local authority.

I scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation and development plan, assessment information, attendance registers and safeguarding records. I considered the views of 14 parents who responded to Parent View and the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.