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Mrs Sara Davies
Headteacher
St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mrs Davies

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

Following my visit to the school on 12 September 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Since your appointment as headteacher in September 2014, you have made sure that the school is a happy and friendly community with a strong sense of moral purpose. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is being strongly developed. The high-quality pastoral care provided is recognised and commented upon by parents, governors and the wider community.

Children's learning and progress in the early years are strengths of this school. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development is well above the national average. Children achieve very well in key areas such as reading and number. The outdoor settings are imaginative and inspiring for young children's learning. All early years' areas have been developed with care and precision to ensure the best opportunities for learning. Leaders have high expectations and provide a strong base for children's future development in the school.

You have successfully addressed the priorities identified in the previous inspection report, and in particular the role of adults in the early years. You continue to refine assessment procedures to ensure that pupils know how to improve their work. Leaders are reflective and open to new ways of working and innovative ideas. Your leadership in developing the school's own science curriculum is evidence of this.

Pupils are well behaved in classes and around the school. They are polite, well mannered and respectful. They are also eager to show visitors their work and take great pride in their school. The pupils' joyful singing and celebration in a school assembly on 'values' showed how much they care about their community. Pupils know about and are keen to tell visitors about the five key values of their school.

Governors are well informed and provide strong oversight of the school. They have a shared vision for the school to achieve even greater success. The governing body is fully aware of its statutory duties. It is developing effective analytical tools to measure and evaluate the spending and impact of the pupil premium provided for disadvantaged pupils. Governors regularly visit the school and provide challenge and support to you and your leaders.

School leaders have a clear understanding of areas of the school's work that need further improvement, in particular to boost the achievement of the most able disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The single central record is maintained to a high standard. Case studies show that the school takes early and decisive action to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils. The governors, including the designated safeguarding governor, ask probing questions to ensure that safeguarding is effective. Training is kept up to date and ensures that staff have a good awareness of local issues and potential problems within the community. Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding within the school.

Pupils understand how to keep safe online and say that they feel safe in school. Leaders have made good links with parents and carers as well as external agencies to help them to support vulnerable pupils. Parents and pupils say that behaviour is good and that instances of bullying are rare. This is because of the strong pastoral support systems put in place in the school. Leaders are aware of the needs and concerns of individual pupils, and parents acknowledge and appreciate this.

Inspection findings

- To confirm that the school remains good, my first key line of enquiry was about outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Test results had shown that few disadvantaged pupils were attaining the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics and most were not making enough progress. You agreed, and said that this is a key priority for the school.
- Leaders have introduced new schemes for spelling and handwriting as well as giving science a high priority in the school. Teachers are focusing more on individual disadvantaged pupils' learning and this is beginning to have an impact on their progress and attainment, especially in reading. Teachers are analysing what mathematical skills disadvantaged pupils need in order to progress more rapidly and are planning interventions to support them. However, there is further

work to do to ensure that more disadvantaged pupils attain the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

- I also looked at the effectiveness of support for pupils in key stage 2 who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, who have not been making the progress expected of them from their starting points. The needs of pupils who have education, health and care plans are now being well met. Teachers and support staff work well together to identify the best way to ensure that teaching provides the appropriate level of challenge and support. Parents are happy with the provision and work closely in partnership with the deputy headteacher for inclusion.
- I investigated the significant dip in the results of the phonics screening check as results in previous years had been above the national average. You have taken swift and decisive action to address this and, with your leadership team, have drawn up a strategic action plan for the current academic year. Leaders conducted a thorough analysis of the reasons for the decline in results and identified precise areas where improvement was needed.
- I observed phonics sessions in classes and the deployment of staff to support pupils. Although at this early stage of the term, new teachers have yet to fully embrace the school's strategies, overall the teaching of phonics is systematic and is being adapted to challenge different ability groups. As a result, pupils are currently making good progress in their phonic knowledge. I heard pupils of all abilities read in Year 2. Those pupils who were not fluent readers were able to apply their phonics skills to decode new words and thereby make progress in their reading. All of the pupils I met said how much they enjoyed reading in school and that they liked the wide range of stories and texts provided. Books were well matched to the abilities of these pupils and also offered an appropriate level of challenge.
- Finally, I considered what actions leaders are taking to reduce persistent absence for pupils who have education, health and care plans, which has been very high for some years. Leaders know these pupils well and records show how leaders have provided support and challenge where necessary. A detailed study of records showed a significant reduction in persistent absence for this group over the last year. The school is now almost in line with the national average in this respect.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- strategies for teaching phonics are consistently applied so that a higher proportion of pupils meet the required standard in the phonics check in Year 1
- leaders increase the challenge and raise the achievement of the most able disadvantaged pupils in reading and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Sean Flood
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held discussions with you and other senior and middle leaders. I spoke with a representative from the local authority and held a meeting with governors, including the chair of the governing body. In addition, I spoke with pupils in class, in structured settings and in informal meetings. I also spoke to parents. I observed pupils' behaviour in class, in the playgrounds and as they moved around the school. I scrutinised pupils' work in a wide range of subjects. I heard readers across the school and spoke with pupils about the books they are reading. I also made visits to all classes alongside senior leaders. I examined the school's progress-tracking information and assessment records. A wide range of documentation concerning safeguarding and attendance was scrutinised. I also looked at behaviour and bullying incident logs. I considered the responses of 147 parents to Parent View and the responses of pupils and staff to Ofsted's online surveys and the school's own internal surveys.