

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



9 February 2018

Mrs Julie Lorkins  
Headteacher  
St Andrew's CofE Primary School  
School Green Lane  
North Weald  
Epping  
Essex  
CM16 6EH

Dear Mrs Lorkins

### **Short inspection of St Andrew's CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 30 January 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 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. Many significant changes have taken place. St Andrew's has grown in numbers and the school buildings have been extended to become a two-form entry school. There have also been many changes to the staff team and the governing body. This period of time has not been without its challenges. In 2016 and 2017, published assessment information shows that the pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics were not good enough because pupils did not make fast enough progress. Your determination to improve outcomes has got the school rapidly back on track so that current pupils are receiving a good and improving education and most are making good progress.

You, the staff and governors are driven by a strong sense of moral purpose. You ensure that the school's inclusive ethos is put into practice. You and the staff team work hard to give all pupils the opportunity to thrive in a positive and nurturing environment. As you explained to me, 'We don't give up on children here.'

You and the deputy headteacher work well together. You have different skills and personalities and these complement each other well. You share the same motivation to continually move the school forward. Together, you have developed a culture of high expectations and of sharing expertise to raise standards. Staff members' responses to Ofsted's questionnaire were universally positive because staff enjoy working at the school and share their leaders' ambition for further improvement.

Parents also recognise that you are an effective leader. This is evident in the many positive comments made in Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Parents describe your 'fantastic leadership' and the 'great job' you perform leading the school. Parents appreciate your 'passion for care', your 'hard work and dedication' and 'interest in each individual pupil'.

Pupils enjoy school and behave well at all times. They respect the adults in the school, who they say are 'very friendly and helpful'. The school's Christian ethos contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and is at the heart of everything the school does. Values such as honesty, consideration, forgiveness, responsibility and friendship are woven into all aspects of the school's work. Pupils understand that such qualities will enable them to become caring and responsible adults in the future. They told me that living out the school's values is important so that 'we help others, have high hopes and work hard to achieve them'.

At the time of the previous inspection, you were asked to improve the quality of teaching by enabling teachers to work alongside each other and further develop their skills. Many of the staff team have joined the school in recent years. They have risen to the challenge of your high expectations and benefited from the support, direction and professional development that you have provided. You are outward-looking and you have enabled staff to learn from other successful schools. You support newly qualified teachers well and so they develop quickly and effectively.

Another area for improvement highlighted in the previous inspection was to provide pupils with better guidance to help them improve their work. Teachers ensure that pupils have regular advice on how to improve, not only with written comments, but also during conversations in lessons. Older pupils told me that they value this advice and can explain clearly how they have used it to advance their learning.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. All required checks on staff are carried out rigorously and recorded carefully. Leaders, governors and staff undertake regular and up-to-date training on child protection and safeguarding issues. All staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities to ensure children's safety and well-being. The scrutiny of files indicate that staff make prompt referrals when they have any concerns. Leaders are tenacious in seeking and pursuing external support when needed.

Pupils said that they feel happy and settled in school. They told me that they know how to keep safe, for example when using the internet. Pupils also said that there is no bullying in the school and that the adults quickly sort out any problems or concerns that they might have.

Almost all the parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children are happy and safe in school.

## Inspection findings

- In order to check whether the school remains good, I followed a number of lines of enquiry. I considered how effectively phonics is taught and whether pupils make good enough progress in this area from their starting points. Published results show that the proportion of pupils that reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been below the national average since the previous inspection.
- Effective steps have been taken by you and other leaders to strengthen phonics provision. Training for staff has successfully raised expectations and daily sessions are now sharper and well paced. Pupils' progress in phonics is closely tracked and targeted support quickly put in place to address any underachievement in order to improve pupils' outcomes. The phonics lessons that we observed together were interactive and fun so pupils were interested and enjoying their learning. When I heard a group of key stage 1 pupils read their books, they demonstrated a good level of phonic knowledge and were able to use and apply their skills to identify sounds when reading different words.
- Teachers introduce pupils to a wide range of high-quality books and through events such as a whole-school 'Readathon' and 'Family Reading Fridays', pupils are encouraged to develop a life-long love of reading. You and other leaders are making sure that the improved teaching of phonics is closely monitored and evaluated over a longer period to ensure that it is having the desired impact. As a result, pupils' attainment in phonics has improved and the school's assessment information indicates that a higher proportion of pupils are expected to achieve the national standard.
- Another line of enquiry focused on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make in key stage 1. This is because, over the last two years, pupils' outcomes have been below the national average. In 2017, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in reading and writing at the end of key stage 1 was below the national average. In addition, the proportion of pupils who attained greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average.
- You and your leaders have developed well-thought-out plans to address this. For example, staff in key stage 1, including those who are new to teaching this key stage or have recently joined the school, have received appropriate training and support from experienced colleagues. This has ensured that staff have a better understanding of the curriculum and what to expect of pupils in this key stage. Consequently, teachers plan work that now meets most pupils' needs and abilities.
- Pupils' work in books and the school's current assessment information confirm that most pupils are making good progress. However, you acknowledge that some pupils are not suitably challenged and more pupils still need to reach greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Finally, I considered how well boys are achieving in reading and writing, compared to girls. This is because published results in 2017 for the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 all show that boys did not achieve as well as girls in

these two subjects. The differences in achievement in mathematics between boys and girls were less marked.

- You and your leaders have set about changing the culture in school so that boys' interest in their learning is maintained and their resilience improves. Leaders and governors are able to talk in detail about how both teaching and the curriculum are being adapted to inspire boys, while at the same time ensuring that girls continue to benefit from the school's high-quality provision.
- Boys spoke about being interested in learning. They told me that they particularly enjoy the different challenges they receive in their mathematics lessons that make them think and 'are just plain fun'. They were less enthusiastic about their reading and writing lessons. The school's current assessment information and work in pupils' books demonstrate that the differences between the achievement of boys and girls in reading and writing are diminishing. By the end of Year 6, these have reduced considerably. However, you have rightly identified that there is more work to do to ensure that boys always achieve the best they can.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a higher proportion of pupils in key stage 1 attain greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics
- the differences in achievement in reading and writing between boys and girls across all phases continue to rapidly diminish so that boys achieve as well as girls.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona Webb  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

- You and I discussed the lines of enquiry for this inspection, the school's internal evaluation of its performance, plans for future improvement, and information about current pupils' progress and attainment.
- Meetings were held with you and a group of your governors. I also spoke to the school's local authority improvement advisor on the telephone.
- I gathered a range of evidence to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This included joint observations with you of teaching and learning in all classes.

- We looked at a sample of pupils' current work across all subjects and across a wide range of abilities.
- I heard some pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 read. I talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- I spoke informally to a number of pupils in classrooms about their learning, and met more formally with a group of pupils to talk about their school experience.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks made during the recruitment of new staff and case studies about referrals made to external agencies. A discussion was held with you and your deputy headteacher as the school's designated safeguarding leads.
- The views of 72 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, as well as the 70 responses parents made using the free-text service.
- I also considered the 31 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and the 12 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.