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Ms Karen Lindridge
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Lindridge

Short inspection of Old Bexley Church of England School

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 2018 with Barbara Breed, Ofsted Inspector, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in February 2015.

In September 2015, Old Bexley Church of England Primary School became an academy and joined the Amadeus Primary Academies Trust.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the inspection of the predecessor school.

You lead the school with determined and clear-sighted vision. All staff share your commitment and ambition for pupils to enjoy learning and reach high standards across a broad and varied curriculum. Teachers and other adults understand what is expected of them and are keen to work together to keep improving.

All leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and regularly review what is going well and what needs to be done better. Senior leaders systematically check how well individual pupils and groups are doing to make sure that any pupils not making enough progress are quickly identified and given extra help.

Governors talk with pride and enthusiasm about the school. Governors visit the school very regularly and are well informed about standards and the progress that pupils are making. Leaders also provide governors with useful information that helps them keep abreast of updates and key information about the impact of the school's work.

The trust provides effective support to the school. Leaders from different schools regularly meet to share good practice and benchmark the progress pupils are making. This enables the schools within the trust to reflect and evaluate their own provision. The support of the trust is providing important added capacity by training leaders and staff and implementing new strategies. An example of this is the tracking and assessment system to monitor the progress that pupils make. This has now enabled the school to ensure that assessment information indicates where it has been successful in ensuring that there is little variation between the performance of different groups of pupils, including those that are disadvantaged.

Parents and carers are extremely supportive. Their written comments on Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and their comments to the inspectors during the inspection, were full of praise for all aspects of the school's work. Several parents who had moved their children from other schools described how their children had flourished as a result of the education and care provided at Old Bexley.

Of the few problems that do arise, parents said that the school addresses them quickly. The vast majority of parents who responded online, as well as those interviewed by inspectors, would recommend this school to other parents. One parent commented, 'This is a very inclusive school that does very well in preparing all children for their next steps, secondary school.'

Staff are very supportive of the leaders and are proud to be part of this school. They are confident that the school has improved since its last inspection and are aware of the priorities for further improvement. They also commented on being treated fairly and with respect by you and other school leaders. They are also keen to share their practice and celebrate the learning that takes place in their classrooms.

Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are strengths of the school, because pupils are respectful of each other and staff ensure that their social and emotional needs are met. One pupil commented, 'Everyone respects each other here, and it makes our school a better place to come to every day.'

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture that safeguarding is of importance to all staff who work at the school. You have robust systems in place to ensure that any safeguarding issues are reported and followed up by school leaders.

Pupils are taught about everyday risks and how to manage these in a sensible way. For example, pupils were able to explain to inspectors the importance of anonymity when using the internet. Training for staff is up to date and checks on staff and visitors are carried out thoroughly.

Staff and governors also take steps to check pupils' understanding of how to stay safe in different situations. Parents are kept informed about the school's work to promote safety messages and are advised about the sort of risks that pupils can encounter when using the internet.

Bullying is a very rare occurrence at Old Bexley and pupils report that unkind behaviour is simply not accepted. Pupils are confident that other pupils or adults would be quick to stop any poor behaviour. They also say that they would always tell an adult at school if they were worried about anything and trust the adults to listen and help them.

Inspection findings

- We focused initially on what you and leaders are doing to ensure that the most able pupils make the best progress in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2. This is because in 2017, standards achieved at the end of Year 6 were good, but progress of the most able pupils was not quite as high.
- As a result, you and leaders have adopted and embraced a coherent system of assessment, which is used well to track and monitor the progress of individual pupils and the progress of groups. This helps you to quickly identify children who may be falling behind and to put interventions in place. Most-able pupils enjoy challenging work and enjoy these activities to extend and enrich their learning. The school's assessment information shows that most-able pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is improving as a result of your actions.
- Next we looked at how leaders were diminishing the differences between boys' and girls' achievement in reading at key stage 1. This was because in 2017, the standards achieved at the end of Year 2 between boys and girls were different in reading. Boys' attainment in reading was better than that of girls.
- Leaders have carefully redesigned the curriculum in line with national changes, which is helping to improve pupils' progress in reading, so that boys' and girls' progress is now more closely matched.
- Teachers also use a variety of creative ways to involve and motivate all pupils, such as the introduction of texts that appeal to both sexes. This has resulted in an increased love of reading for both boys and girls and this was evident in pupils being able to talk with excitement about the books they were reading.
- Mathematics teaching is organised and effective. Pupils' work shows that they cover a lot of ground and secure number skills. Opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their reasoning skills, however, are less apparent.
- We next looked at the strategies the school was using to promote good attendance. This was because in 2017, attendance dropped and the number of pupils who are persistently absent has increased.
- You use attendance information well to track and monitor the attendance of individual pupils and groups of pupils. Using this information, you have been able to support some families to improve their child's attendance very successfully. Overall attendance is now above national averages and your effective work with families has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of pupils who are

persistently absent.

- Finally, we looked at how leaders were ensuring that the wider curriculum for pupils is broad, balanced and deep.
- Work in the pupils' topic books covers a variety of topics. Pupils take part in a wide range of events to celebrate 'Britishness'. Pupils also take part in a range of activities that help them to learn about other cultures and religions, for example in different religious celebrations at key points in the year. Teachers now need to impress on pupils the need to ensure that the presentation of their work is as important as the good attitudes to learning we saw.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the presentation in books reflects the good attitudes to learning seen in pupils' behaviour
- pupils have more opportunities to apply the mathematical skills they have learned to further develop their reasoning skills.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Rochester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bexley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Danvir Visvanathan
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We carried out a scrutiny of the single central record of recruitment checks and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection, including the school's safeguarding policy and other policies relating to governance, pupils' behaviour and attendance. We held meetings with you, other senior leaders, five governors and the chief executive officer of Amadeus Primary Academies Trust. We conducted a review of the school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plans, observations of learning across the school, and analysis of pupils' writing, mathematics and wider curriculum books. We also carried out observations of pupils in a range of situations, including at breaktime and lunchtime, and held conversations with a group of pupils and with pupils in lessons, on the playground and in the dining hall. We listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read. A scrutiny of 117 parent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 115 free-text responses from parents, together with 69 pupil and 44 staff inspection survey responses, was also conducted.