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Mrs Claire Nurse
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Nurse

Short inspection of Cannington Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 March 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Recent staffing changes and appointments, especially to the senior leadership team, have been effective in identifying and tackling areas for improvement. You work well with others, including governors, who have a realistic and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Your honest evaluations are enabling you to take the right actions to improve teaching, learning and assessment across the school. In addition, you have made key revisions to how you track pupils' progress. These enable teachers to have a good understanding of those pupils who need to be targeted for additional support to catch up. Governors also play their part by visiting the school to find out what the quality of teaching and provision is like. They use this information to offer the right support and challenge in helping to secure necessary improvements.

You check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment effectively, taking account of what you see in lessons, pupils' work books and assessment information. At those times when you identify weaknesses, such as in mathematics previously this year, you respond quickly so that teachers are supported to improve. This ensures that pupils' learning and their achievement are a high priority. Despite three new appointments this year and some recent disruption caused through unforeseen personal circumstances, you have kept a strong focus on pupils' achievement to ensure that lessons and learning remain interesting, purposeful and matched to pupils' needs. Parents and carers strongly endorse the school. In fact, 97% would recommend it to others, and some have contacted Ofsted, making comments which

include, 'Our children feel enthused by activities at school and make good progress. They are challenged and enjoy this. The vibe at the school is good and the values that the school hold are the ones we value as a family.'

Since the previous inspection, you have concentrated on improving systems to help teachers know which pupils need more support. This is enabling you to hold meaningful discussions with teachers about what pupils need to learn next. For example, target setting and pupil progress meetings are beneficial in raising expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. You are also using pupils' prior attainment to check their 'flight path', to ensure that pupils are appropriately supported and challenged. However, as we discussed, there are still weaknesses in the quality, detail and robustness of plans for individual pupils to help them to catch up. For example, a Year 2 reading support plan included, 'To use my phonics knowledge to read and spell phase 3 words.' This demonstrates that some pupils are still not receiving precise next steps to enable them to make the rapid progress needed in reading, writing and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team ensures that administration, including pre-employment checks, mandatory training for staff and systems for child protection are robust and effective. This means that staff remain highly aware and vigilant. They know what to do and how to respond in keeping pupils safe. You and other leaders have proven to be catalysts in leading intervention directly on behalf of vulnerable pupils. This has led to timely action in supporting vulnerable pupils and helping them at home and school. Governors are also acutely aware of their responsibilities and are proactive in checking safeguarding matters, such as the recent improvements to the school's site security and in their termly checking of the single central record.

Pupils said that they feel safe. They are happy in school and do not feel that there is bullying. Pupils also feel that, if there are disputes or concerns, they are listened to and trust staff to take the appropriate action to help them. Pupils are also aware of other situations which may be hazardous and know what to do to stay safe, for example, when working online and responding to the school's evacuation procedures.

Inspection findings

- My first key line of enquiry focused on the progress of particular groups of pupils in reading in key stage 2, especially prior middle-attaining girls. This is because their achievement in 2017 was lower than that of others. You and your leaders were already aware of this and had already taken subsequent steps to improve the teaching of reading. Pupils are now introduced to a greater variety of text types, which they study in detail. Their improved familiarity with non-fiction text is supporting them well when they are writing independently.
- The recently appointed deputy headteacher has completed effective work to replenish and re-stock the library and build a strengthened progression in the reading materials available. This is ensuring that pupils in key stage 2, including

girls, are accessing a range of different books to develop their reading ability. However, teachers do not pick up quickly when pupils select books which are too easy for them. This means that books are not well suited to some pupils' needs.

- Pupils, including girls, consistently told me that they enjoy reading. They recognise the importance of reading and provide examples of how teachers have supported them individually to increase their enjoyment and confidence.
- My second key line of enquiry evaluated the progress of pupils in key stage 2 mathematics. Leaders identified that some groups and individuals made modest progress in 2017. The mathematics subject leader is knowledgeable, and her intentions and ambitions have been well communicated and understood by teachers. Her successful monitoring, intervention and support are improving the teaching of mathematics. For example, recent work on developing pupils' fluency, planning precisely for pupils' different needs and abilities, is clearly evident in pupils' work books. As a result, pupils are now making strong progress to catch up.
- A new assessment and planning framework, introduced by the subject leader, has sharpened teachers' focus on pupil progress in mathematics. As a result, age-appropriate tasks and challenges are being set, which help pupils to catch up well. Workbooks show teachers checking pupils' knowledge and appropriately taking them forwards, or backwards, to consolidate their knowledge of key concepts.
- My third key line of enquiry evaluated how well children are supported through the early years foundation stage (EYFS) and into Year 1, with a particular focus on literacy skills and phonics. In 2017, the proportion of pupils securing the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check rose from 54% to 77%. Additional staff training and revision of how daily phonics is being taught are helping pupils to secure key age-appropriate knowledge more readily. This is reflected, for example, in the majority of pupils understanding phonemes such as '-ow' and '-igh'. Improvements have also been noted through governor visits and monitoring.
- However, you are aware that there are still some weaknesses in the approach to your daily phonics programme, which hold some pupils back. In particular, although teachers' observations and assessments are accurate, they do not always use this information systematically or strategically to target pupils who need to catch up quickly. In addition, daily sessions do not make best use of other adults and resources that pupils need, especially lower-attaining pupils. These are areas for development that are required to continue the improvements seen in the previous year.
- My fourth line of enquiry, which focused on safeguarding, also took into account pupils' attendance. Pupils' historic and current absence remains above the national average. In addition, the proportion of pupils with persistent absence is also above the national figure, including that of vulnerable groups. You are working diligently with others, including families, to remedy this. You monitor attendance and keep in contact with parents in a bid to improve attendance. However, absence remains high for some vulnerable pupils and groups, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or

disabilities.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- support plans have clear and measurable next steps to help vulnerable pupils who have fallen behind to catch up quickly
- further improvements are made to strengthen the teaching of daily phonics sessions, especially teachers' use of assessment information for lower-attaining pupils
- attendance is improved, in particular for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

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

Yours sincerely

Stewart Gale
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We agreed the timetable and activities for the inspection. I worked extensively with you and sampled a range of pupils' mathematics work and checked this against the school's assessment and tracking system. I also heard various pupils read, including in lessons. I scrutinised safeguarding records, and we discussed a wide range of related matters, including staff recruitment, training and vetting arrangements. I spoke to pupils and staff about their views of safeguarding. I evaluated evidence that shows how you work with other agencies to keep children safe. Together, we visited all classes in the school. I met with representatives of the governing body and reviewed school documents, including the school's self-evaluation summary and records of governors' visits. I took full account of the 60 responses on Parent View and reviewed the free texts received throughout the inspection. I spoke with pupils throughout inspection activities and during breaktime. I had a discussion with the local authority adviser and read recent visit notes undertaken by him. In the afternoon, I also had a discussion and reviewed evidence in pupils' work books with the mathematics subject leader.