

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mr Lee Faris  
Headteacher  
The Vine Inter-Church Primary School  
The Vines  
Upper Cambourne  
Cambourne  
Cambridgeshire  
CB23 6DY

Dear Mr Faris

### **Short inspection of The Vine Inter-Church Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 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 December 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The Vine has maintained the positive ethos noted in the previous inspection whereby pupils develop consideration for the feelings of others alongside strong academic skills and knowledge. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and feel well informed about their children's progress. This is evident in the many positive comments made by parents on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. For example, parents wrote about the 'very approachable staff', 'the warm, supportive environment' and that 'pupils are nurtured to respect, love and care for others and know what is right.'

Focused leadership, alongside that of governors, has ensured that the vision of success has continued over time. This is acknowledged and appreciated by many parents, who commented on how well the recent handover and transition period between headteachers has been managed. You are providing a clear vision, laid out in your school improvement plan, to ensure that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make accelerated progress from their respective starting points.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They are respectful, kind and supportive of each other, resulting in a harmonious learning environment throughout the school. Pupils are highly enthusiastic learners. They respond well to teachers' expectations. Through the curriculum, you have ensured that pupils develop an understanding of the importance of tolerance, fairness and free speech. As a consequence, many pupils are able to articulate clearly their thoughts about how to live successfully in a community.

You correctly judge the early years provision to be a strength of the school. Strong leadership, alongside close liaison with the separate pre-school, has ensured that an increasing number of children gain the skills required to be successful learners at The Vine. The previous inspection report noted the importance of sharing good practice and this has been achieved within the early years setting. The proportion of children making a good level of development increased to just above the national average in 2017. Inspection evidence demonstrated that staff structure activities to meet the needs of the children. Children have a range of opportunities to develop their early reading, writing and mathematical knowledge through exciting and engaging activities.

You and your leadership team take effective action where you consider improvements are necessary. For example, as a result of the changes you introduced to the teaching of phonics in key stage 1, an increased proportion of pupils reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2017. You recognise, however, that there are still areas where the school needs to improve and these are clearly laid out in your school improvement plan. You acknowledge that you need to increase disadvantaged pupils' achievements in all areas of the curriculum. You are also aware of the need to accelerate the progress of pupils in key stage 2 so that an increased proportion exceed national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Pupils at The Vine spoke confidently about the ways in which school leaders and staff work hard to keep them safe and look after them. Pupils know who to go to if they have a concern and feel supported by the ways in which issues are resolved. One parent described the school as a 'family', and pupils echo this analogy.

Pupils know how to keep safe on the internet and the reasons for doing so. Pupils understand what bullying is and explained that while it may happen, it is resolved quickly and effectively by staff.

Leaders, including governors, ensure that safeguarding arrangements are robust. Records, including checks made on adults who work at the school, are vigilantly checked, monitored and reviewed. Leaders take swift and appropriate action to ensure that pupils are protected when there is the risk of danger.

### **Inspection findings**

- To ascertain that the school remained good, one of my key lines of enquiry was about how the leadership team is ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make accelerated progress from their relative starting points so that they achieve at least in line with pupils nationally at key stage 1 and key stage 2. The previous inspection report noted the importance of sharing good practice and this is facilitated by strong leadership at all levels. Teachers share planning and approaches to improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. You have also ensured the dissemination of new approaches to the tracking and monitoring of

disadvantaged pupils so that their strengths and weaknesses can be identified swiftly. As a consequence, current disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment have improved markedly.

- The school is reflective about those approaches that have an impact and the ones that do not. As a result, leaders have adapted the ways in which staff support disadvantaged pupils to make rapid progress. Pupils receive bespoke intervention by their class teacher to address the gaps in their understanding, skills and knowledge. As a consequence, disadvantaged pupils are currently making better progress than in previous years. However, it is too early to judge the long-term impact of these strategies, and you acknowledge that this remains an area for improvement.
- My second key line of enquiry focused on how leaders were ensuring that the most able pupils make rapid progress so that they exceed national expectations at key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. The previous inspection report raised the importance of making sure that pupils reached the highest standards. In 2016 and 2017, pupils did not maintain the rapid progress at key stage 2 that they had achieved at key stage 1. However, although their attainment was in line with national expectations, many pupils did not exceed them. Leaders have acknowledged the importance of accelerating progress at key stage 2 in the school improvement plan.
- As a reflective school, leaders and staff have embedded changes to the tracking, monitoring and review of pupils' progress. As a consequence, leaders and staff are becoming increasingly more aware of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and the need to provide additional support when necessary. Additionally, staff have adapted the guidance they provide to help pupils to improve their work. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of this new approach.
- Inspection evidence demonstrated that some staff set challenging tasks for pupils in many areas of the curriculum at key stage 2. For example, pupils in a Year 6 class developed their skills of inferring the nuance of language in a novel, 'Once' by Morris Gleitzman. Similarly, pupils in a Year 4 class were applying prior knowledge to work out the rules for sequences of decimals. As a result, current progress information for pupils shows that they are making better progress than previous years. However, the level of challenge in key stage 2 classes is still inconsistent.
- My third line of enquiry focused on how well the school supports pupils' welfare and well-being both in school and beyond. Through constant monitoring of pupils' emotional well-being by staff, pupils' issues are addressed quickly. Staff evaluate pupils' self-esteem twice a year. As a result, pupils who are less confident receive bespoke counselling and mentoring, which enables them to develop healthy resilience and helps them to access the curriculum more successfully.
- Through careful monitoring and the provision of additional support, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved.
- Year 6 pupils work as peer mediators, enabling pupils to resolve their issues and develop emotional understanding of the feelings of others. Additionally, Year 6

pupils act as play leaders to help younger pupils develop their social skills and forge successful friendships. The school is welcoming and nurturing, ensuring that pupils develop key attributes to help them deal with issues in the outside world. A Year 2 pupil told me that 'the school was not the best in Cambourne, not the best in Cambridge ... but the best in the universe,' which echoes how many other pupils feel about the school.

- My final line of enquiry was about how leaders ensure that pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils at The Vine have a range of opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Specialist physical education teaching enables pupils and staff to hone their skills. Pupils develop strong skills in art, music, geography, history and Spanish. In addition, pupils have a range of additional activities from which to choose, such as archery and piano-playing.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- an increased proportion of disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress so that they achieve at least in line with other pupils nationally in all areas of the curriculum
- teachers use assessment information effectively to embed greater challenge at key stage 2 so that an increased proportion of pupils make rapid progress and exceed national expectations in all areas of the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Aykin  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

- During the course of this inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior and middle leaders and a group of five governors. I also met with your school improvement partner.
- I spoke with pupils informally in classrooms and when walking around the school site. I also met with a group of 16 pupils.
- During two tours of the school with you, I visited each class and observed pupils at work.
- I undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work in their books and folders.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, along with the school's record of checks carried out on staff working at the school.

- A range of documents were analysed or discussed, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; documents relating to pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour; minutes of governor meetings and curriculum plans.
- I considered the views of 79 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views parents expressed via free-text. I also considered the views of 33 members of staff and 56 pupils.