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21 February 2019

Mrs Serena Roberts
St Mary's CofE Voluntary Controlled Infant School
Shackleford Road
Shackleford
Godalming
Surrey
GU8 6AE

Dear Mrs Roberts

No formal designation inspection of St Mary's CofE Voluntary Controlled Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 5 February 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about pupils' outcomes following a reported decline in pupils' attainment in writing in 2018.

Evidence

I met with you, middle leaders, and two governors including the chair. We jointly observed learning in seven lessons, covering all three classes including Reception, and looked at pupils' work. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including information about pupils' achievement and the school improvement plan. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I spoke to parents at the start of the day to gather their views on the school. I met with pupils at breaktime and gathered the views of several pupils throughout the day. I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements.

Having considered the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and governors have taken effective action to maintain the high standards of pupils' outcomes identified at the previous section 5 inspection. The overall

effectiveness of the school remains outstanding.

Context

Since the previous inspection, many staff have remained in post. You joined the school in September 2009, two months after the previous inspection report was published. Recently, you joined a local consortium of schools to share knowledge and expertise, and to moderate your judgements and evaluations. Over the past three years, the proportion of pupils in the school with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has risen and is now above the national average.

Inspection findings

You know the school exceptionally well and set out your expectations for high standards clearly to staff, parents and carers, and pupils. Everyone plays their part and, collectively, do their best to achieve great things in this small school. The impact of this was clearly noted by parents, who feel the school provides their children with the best possible start in life. Parents of children with SEND hold the school in particularly high regard. One parent told me, 'While other schools turned me away, this school welcomed me, and my child, with open arms.'

All teachers take on the leadership of several subject areas. They form a cohesive and ambitious group, taking great pride in their work and wanting the very best for the children. They debate the way they teach and consider the impact of their work. They are open minded and work together to find the best way to do things for the pupils. This approach has been particularly effective for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Staff carefully consider the needs of these pupils at an individual level, directing additional resources and adapting the curriculum to ensure that all pupils can thrive. Staff quickly recognise any weakness in performance and address these head on. As a result, standards continue to improve.

The curriculum is designed carefully to promote pupils' love of learning and builds their skills in a steady and logical manner. The regular 'spectacular days' help pupils to gain first-hand experience in a range of subject areas and broaden their understanding of the world outside of the school gates. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 visited a local pizzeria, learning to make bread and consider how different ingredients will alter the flavour, and nutritional value, of their food. Standards across the curriculum are very high.

Pupils use their excellent philosophy and communication skills to review, compare and evaluate information, for instance in geography, where pupils in Year 1 considered the difference between tropical and temperate countries, making clear and reflective references to how this may impact the lives of those who live there. The broad and high-quality curriculum ensures that pupils throughout the school make rapid progress in a range of subjects.

Standards of writing are exceptionally high. Pupils are taught to write in clear, cursive script and present their work with care and pride. The high standards start in Reception, where teachers and support staff skilfully guide pupils to gain the fine motor control and pencil grip they need to present their work beautifully. Pupils often rehearse their writing verbally, which helps them to iron out any weaknesses and make minor edits before committing their thoughts to paper. Increasing proportions of pupils now write at a high standard as they use their skills to evaluate and explain more abstract and complicated processes.

In mathematics, pupils make excellent progress because they are taught to solve problems using their well-established reasoning and calculation skills. Pupils work hard, discussing their thinking with peers and staff and testing out a range of solutions before settling for their final answer. As a result, greater than average proportions of pupils attain at a high standard.

Governors are evaluative and demonstrate a strong knowledge of the school, its pupils and staff. They have a clear understanding of the outcomes pupils achieve and judiciously use external validation, as well as their own visits to the school, to check that high levels of performance are maintained. They possess a significant range of skills and they carefully audit what attributes they will need as the school develops. In recent months, they have recruited colleagues with qualifications in social work and law, and subject specialists from secondary education to help to support and challenge the school to be even better. They are well placed to secure further improvement.

Governors' oversight of the school policies is focused and strategic. They spend significant time ensuring that all pupils, families and staff are welcomed and supported regardless of their religion, disability or gender. Nevertheless, governors recognise that the website is not yet compliant with statutory publishing requirements as it does not fully set out the school's equality objectives.

Safeguarding

Staff undergo the correct safeguarding checks and complete statutory training well before they commence employment. They use this well and pay careful attention to the needs of all families and children at the school. Their diligent and considered approach means that when help is required, leaders, working alongside external agencies, can provide support quickly and efficiently.

Governors' efforts to ensure that pupils are safe are well-judged and effective. They have worked hard with the local authority to ensure that the site is secure and attend the regular staff training to ensure that their own understanding is of a high standard.

Pupils are taught to stay safe. They regularly consider how to stay safe online and have learned how to develop responsible habits to reduce their screen time. Parents, equally, appreciate the useful training provided by the Child Exploitation

and Online Protection Command (CEOP) which has helped them to understand the dangers posed by unmonitored internet use and how to diminish the risks involved.

Priorities for further improvement

- Review and refine the whole-school equality objectives to meet statutory publishing requirements.

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

Yours sincerely

Daniel Lambert
Her Majesty's Inspector