

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



22 May 2019

Mr Christopher Speller
Headteacher
St Edward's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Havering Drive
Romford
Essex
RM1 4BT

Dear Mr Speller

Short inspection of St Edward's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 May 2019 with Diane Rochford, 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 the school was judged to be good in July 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since that time, there have been significant leadership and staffing changes, including two interim headteachers during this academic year. You joined the school as the permanent headteacher five weeks ago, as did the deputy headteacher. Half of the staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey were not at the school at the previous inspection.

During this period of change, governors have been unafraid to make the difficult decisions necessary to ensure that the school continues to function effectively. They have made changes to the leadership structure and ensured that staff are held to account for their impact on pupils' progress.

You have quickly identified the school's strengths and its priorities for improvement. You, your leadership team and governors demonstrate a clear vision for the school, based on its strong Christian ethos, and show ambition for the pupils. Pupils are proud to attend a school which inspires them to behave well and get along with all the members of the school community.

Despite staffing turbulence since the previous inspection, steps have been taken to respond to the identified areas for improvement. For example, additional adults are now used well to support pupils who need the most help. Teachers use more accurate assessments to plan work to meet the needs of the most able.

In 2018, there was a significant fall in the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 and 6, reflecting weak progress in reading, writing and, particularly, in mathematics.

Leaders and governors have formed strong links with local schools to support the improvement of leadership and teaching and learning. These networks are providing opportunities for teachers to learn from strong practice. As a result of this and the work undertaken with teachers in the school, most pupils are now making at least good progress in a range of subjects, including pupils in Years 2 and 6. Even so, the quality of teaching is not yet consistently strong across all subjects and year groups and remains a priority for the leadership team.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. This has included making sure that arrangements for keeping pupils safe have been maintained through a period of transition in staffing. Checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are in place and are regularly monitored by the governing body. In addition to staff training, you provide regular safeguarding bulletins to staff and to parents and carers to remind them of the school's duties. Staff understand the procedures they must follow should a concern arise about the well-being of a pupil, and subsequent actions are followed up effectively. You work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the right support in a timely way.

Pupils report that they feel safe in the school and are confident that, if they had a problem, it would be resolved by adults in the school. Pupils were eager to share what they know about how to keep safe online and in their local area. Parents feel that their children are safe in the school. Most parents who completed the Ofsted online parent survey would recommend the school.

Inspection findings

- For my first key line of enquiry, I considered the effectiveness of the new leadership team. This is because there have been recent rapid changes in senior leadership, and middle leadership has been a priority for the school since the previous inspection.
- Inspection evidence suggests that interim and new leaders have maintained and raised the expectations of staff and pupils. Leaders know the school well because they monitor its work and regularly seek the views of parents, staff and pupils. They use this knowledge to take strategic action. This has resulted in improving quality of teaching and outcomes, particularly in Years 2 and 6. It has also led to improved standards of behaviour, as confirmed by parents in their responses to the questionnaire.
- The role of middle leaders has been strengthened so that they are contributing more to whole-school improvement. The headteacher acknowledges that middle leaders now need to be more evaluative of the impact of their work to ensure that they are being as effective as they can be.
- Governors provide effective support and challenge for school leaders and so are able to drive improvement. They are in the process of ensuring that school systems and development priorities are well matched. For example, they are working with you to review how the evaluation of teachers' performance is linked

to the school's current areas for development.

- My next area of focus was leaders' effectiveness in improving the quality of teaching. Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of teaching across the school and subjects. Work with local partner schools has supported teachers in receiving useful professional development to improve their practice. Teachers have valued having opportunities for coaching, team teaching and joint moderation over the past year.
- There is evidence of effective teaching across the school as a result of this work, with strong subject knowledge and appropriate challenge for pupils, including the most able. This was seen, for example, in the teaching of writing. Pupils received effective support from adults to make strong progress, with a number of pupils working at the higher standard. For example, one pupil explained how she was now using more sophisticated vocabulary in her writing because of guidance from her teacher. Strategies to improve teaching and learning are, however, not yet embedded or ensuring consistency across year groups and subjects, in part because the main focus of monitoring to date has been on key stage 1.
- Another key line of enquiry involved the progress of disadvantaged pupils by the end of key stage 2 in mathematics; this was weaker than that of other pupils in 2018.
- Leaders regularly monitor the school's provision for disadvantaged pupils, and an external review was carried out by the local authority earlier this year. The school has acted swiftly on advice given in the review and has changed aspects of its practice. Leaders continue to be ambitious for this group of pupils and monitor and track their progress more closely.
- Teachers have changed their approach to teaching mathematics to include more practical work in lessons. This enables pupils to understand mathematical ideas better. Leaders monitor how these strategies are ensuring better progress for disadvantaged pupils. The school's analysis shows that most disadvantaged pupils are now making good progress. However, some struggle because they do not get sufficient opportunities to revisit topics that they find difficult. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Lastly I looked into how well pupils with SEND are supported to make progress in their reading, particularly in phonics. This is because, in 2018, their progress in reading was weaker than that of other pupils. Overall, an average proportion of pupils in Year 1 met the expected standard in the national phonics screening check.
- The school is working to raise the overall achievement of pupils with SEND. The inclusion lead has accurately identified and is addressing the gaps in their learning. Following training in high-needs provision, leaders are now helping teachers to adapt their teaching, including through a revised approach to the teaching of phonics.
- There is some strong practice in the teaching of phonics, but this is not yet meeting the needs of all pupils. In particular, work is not consistently well matched to the needs of pupils with SEND and lower attainers more generally,

who are not yet making the progress of which they are capable.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the range of effective approaches to improve teaching that have been put in place are fully embedded to eradicate weaker teaching
- teachers plan phonics tasks more carefully, so that they provide the appropriate level of challenge for pupils with SEND
- in mathematics, teachers provide opportunities for lower-attaining pupils to revisit topics that they find difficult, so that they make at least good progress.

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 Havering. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Karla Martin-Theodore
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, my colleague and I met with you, other members of the leadership team and teaching staff. I met with six governors, including the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority. We carried out short observations in different year groups and looked at pupils' work in their books. We talked with pupils in lessons and at breaktime and met with a small group to talk about school life and work. By the end of the inspection, there were 113 responses on Parent View and 75 written comments. I took account of these responses and considered 57 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. I looked at several documents, including pupils' records and school policy documents, the school's evaluation of its performance and reports from the local authority. I also checked the school's website and the procedures for keeping pupils safe.