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Mrs Vicki Bradley
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Dear Mrs Bradley

Short inspection of All Saints CofE (C) First School

Following my visit to the school on 11 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 October 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Since the previous inspection, the school has entered into an informal collaboration with several other local schools, and members of your leadership team have opportunities to work with these schools.

You work with a relentless determination to instil a culture of high aspirations, expectations and achievement. You successfully motivate and inspire pupils and staff who share your ambition and work hard to live up to the high expectations. Staff, pupils and governors are proud of their school, enjoy working in it and feel valued and respected. Morale is high.

Standards have risen significantly since the previous inspection. You and your staff work with a shared and strong commitment to increase pupils' aspirations and achievement. Pupils and staff work hard to meet your high expectations. One parent wrote: 'As a parent I cannot praise this school highly enough. It's a wonderful setting for children to thrive, learn, have fun, be happy and enjoy the start to their education.'

You have successfully tackled the areas for improvement identified during the previous inspection. For example, the actions taken in mathematics have had a marked impact on pupils' achievement, leading to strong and rapid progress. In 2017, the proportion of pupils in key stage 1 who reached expected and greater depth in mathematics was above that found nationally. Pupils are challenged appropriately by work that is very well matched to their different abilities.

Since your appointment in September 2014, you have ensured that all staff are held to account very effectively for pupils' achievement. Effective and insightful monitoring ensures that you accurately identify the strengths of the school and the areas for further development. You have correctly identified, for example, that there is scope, particularly in key stage 1, to improve writing outcomes to match those in reading. However, in this smaller than average-sized first school I recognise results can vary considerably because of the small numbers taking the tests.

Pupils are extremely happy and thrive at the school. They enjoy all that they do and work with enthusiasm, having the confidence to 'have a go' and learn from their mistakes. They behave impeccably and are respectful and well mannered at all times. They enjoy the responsibilities they are given and take them seriously. For example, pupil monitors ensure that all equipment is stored appropriately at the end of playtime and lunchtime. You have established a rich and varied curriculum with a wealth of additional activities. One pupil commented, 'I really like all of the different clubs I attend at this school.'

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose and well implemented. Day-to-day routines are secure. Staff have regular training and a strong culture of safeguarding and care permeates the school. A real strength of the school is how well you and your staff know all of the pupils. Relationships across the school are extremely positive. As one parent commented about the school, 'It is a safe, happy place and all the staff ensure that it offers the best learning and care.' Pre-employment checks to ensure the suitability of all adults who work or volunteer in the school are fully in place.

Pupils say that they feel extremely safe in school and that they are confident to turn to adults in school if they have any concerns. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their children feel safe in school and are well looked after. Regular checks and risk assessments are made to ensure the safety of the site.

Inspection findings

- At the beginning of the inspection we agreed to focus on the following aspects: the effectiveness of teaching in both phases; children's progress in the early years; teaching of phonics and safeguarding.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard and greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 in 2016 and 2017

was above that found nationally. Evidence seen during our visits to all classrooms, talking to pupils and looking at their books and supported by school data indicate that current pupils are making good and often rapid progress from their starting points.

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the early years dipped slightly in 2017, but remained above the national average. In this small school the achievement of only one or two children can significantly impact on overall results and the 2017 cohort had several children who had special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders are ensuring that these pupils are receiving appropriate additional support in Year 1 so they make rapid gains to catch up in their learning. Scrutiny of work carried out by children currently in early years indicates that they are making good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have swiftly responded to the results of the phonics screening check of 2017, which were below the national average. Effective professional development has ensured that adults' subject knowledge of phonics is secure. Pupils' work shows that they are able to apply their increasing phonics knowledge to their independent writing. I observed pupils confidently using their skills to read appropriate to their age. Pupils whose progress is a cause for concern are carefully monitored. They receive helpful intervention, tailored to their specific needs and gaps. Pupils enjoy their phonics lessons.
- You acknowledge that, until recently, some teaching in Years 3 and 4 has not always provided sufficient opportunities for pupils to make the progress of which they are capable. You have carried out a programme of effective mentoring and looking particularly at work in Years 3 and 4, this indicates that the overwhelming majority of pupils are making strong progress.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Their strategic decision-making fully supports the school's key developments and vision. Governors participate in regular training and, as a result, they provide you with effective support and challenge. They visit the school regularly and check that funding is used wisely and is targeting the right areas.
- All Saints School has invested time and finances and is benefiting from the informal collaboration with other local schools. The shared training and expertise gives the strength of a larger school while maintaining a small village school feel.
- Teachers of similar-aged pupils work together to improve teaching and learning. Teachers are able to collaborate with colleagues, moderate pupils' work and share ideas. Your investment in middle leaders who work across the schools has significantly raised the profile of mathematics and English. Because of the impending retirement of a member of staff, you are keen to develop further this aspect to school improvement when appointing new members of staff in the future.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they build on the work already done to ensure consistency of teaching that matches the very best already taking place in the school

- new staff employed at the school are supported and monitored to ensure that the high standards of provision continue to enable pupils to make rapid progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Steven Cartlidge
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke with you and other leaders. We visited classes together to observe pupils' learning and scrutinised their work. I talked to pupils in lessons and in a meeting, when I listened to their views of the school. I listened to some pupils read. A wide range of documentary evidence was scrutinised, including information about pupils' performance, the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan and safeguarding documentation. I met with the chair of the governing body and two other governors. I also spoke by telephone to your school evaluation partner. I looked at your records for teaching, learning and assessment and documents for the governing body. I took account of 23 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including five free-text comments. I also considered the nine responses to the staff questionnaire and 15 pupil responses distributed as part of the inspection.