

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



15 September 2016

Caroline Harvey
Headteacher
All Saints' and St Richard's Church of England Primary School
School Hill
Old Heathfield
Heathfield
East Sussex
TN21 9AE

Dear Ms Harvey

Short inspection of All Saints' and St Richard's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 July 2016, 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 November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

You have led the school with determination and resilience since the previous inspection in November 2011. Staff turnover is high and you are the only member of staff who was at the school then. Staff leave the school to pursue further professional development and career opportunities in larger schools. Nevertheless, you work very hard to ensure that pupils receive consistently strong teaching day after day. Although there have been dips in the quality of teaching during the past five years, you have supported staff well and have now secured a strong team that provide pupils with consistently good teaching across the curriculum. You are ably supported by your staff, who take their responsibilities seriously and understand school improvement. They are committed to your aspirations for the school and are ambitious for pupils to achieve well. Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. A parent summed up the views of most parents by saying, 'I could not wish for a better school for my children'.

Pupils are taught in three mixed-aged classes. Cohort sizes vary each year and are sometimes very small. The number of pupils that arrive at the school and leave the school during each academic year is exceptionally high. Overall, children enter the school with knowledge, skills and understanding that are broadly typical for their age, although children's ability can vary greatly within each very small cohort. Their progress during the early years is good. The proportion reaching the level of achievement that is typical for their age has risen dramatically over the past three

years. Now, more children achieve a good level of development than the national average. This year, a third of children exceeded this expectation in many areas of their learning.

You have ensured that this increasingly positive start has been built on. In 2015, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard for their age in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 was well above the national average. At least half of pupils attained the highest standards in all three subjects. This is particularly noteworthy as only a fifth of pupils in this cohort reached a good level of development by the end of the early years. Pupils in key stage 1 continue to achieve highly, even though it is even more challenging to reach the standard expected by the end of Year 2.

Published data for key stage 2 results in 2015 was not amended to take account of the school's own performance information, and therefore does not accurately reflect the progress and attainment of pupils who left the school in 2015. This is because pupils were inaccurately recorded as being present at the school when the end of Year 6 tests were taken, when they had in fact left. In reality, all pupils made expected progress in reading and nearly all pupils made expected progress in writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard for their age was in line with national average in reading, writing and mathematics and the proportion reaching the highest levels in reading and writing exceeded national averages. Pupils who were at the school in Year 2 attained highly in reading, writing and mathematics and continued to do so by the end of Year 6. A third of pupils joined the school during key stage 2, some of whom had no recorded prior attainment at key stage 1.

Conversely, current Year 6 pupils achieved less well than the national average by the end of Year 2. Nonetheless, all pupils have made at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics during key stage 2.

Current information about the progress that pupils make over time and the work in their books show that pupils make good progress in all year groups, including pupils in key stage 2. The proportion working at age-related expectations increases year on year as pupils continue to build on what they know. The number of pupils working at the highest levels of attainment is also improving because more pupils are making expected or more than expected progress.

You know the strengths and areas for development extremely well and have been diligent in trying to address areas for improvement. You are supported well by the highly experienced governing body and a supportive local authority representative. You have cultivated a positive staff team who are single-minded in their drive to provide a high standard of education for pupils. You work closely together to accurately evaluate the school's effectiveness and plan ways to make it even better.

You know that the number of pupils who achieved the expected standard in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) by the end of Year 1 in 2015 was too low. In 2015 the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard fell for the second year. Although very small cohort numbers make comparisons between yearly

achievements difficult, and a very high number of pupils joined and left the school during Year 1, you have tackled phonics teaching head on. The phonics lead has carefully analysed weaknesses in pupils' phonics and runs workshops for parents so that they can reinforce their children's learning at home. As a result, standards have rapidly risen once more. This year, all pupils have achieved the expected standard by the end of Year 1 and nearly all pupils who did not reach the expected standard last year have caught up during Year 2. You make sure that pupils continue to receive support if they are taking longer to grasp early reading skills. Phonics is now taught well in the early years and key stage 1. Consequently, pupils are able to apply what they know to read with fluency and spell with increasing accuracy. This in turn has had a positive impact on the progress that pupils are making in their writing.

You and your staff have worked conscientiously to meet the recommendations from the previous inspection which required the school to raise pupils' attainment in mathematics and provide greater opportunities for pupils to interact with other pupils who may be different from themselves. Because the quality of teaching has improved to be consistently strong in all key stages, learning is well matched to the needs of pupils. Pupils are increasingly building on what they already know and can do, to rapidly improve their mathematical understanding. Commendably, pupils are provided with ample opportunities to apply what they know in mathematics, to problem solve and to explain their reasoning. Subsequently, more pupils are making good progress and are working at the standard expected for their age throughout the school.

You have ensured that British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are woven seamlessly throughout the curriculum so that these values are taught in a meaningful and contextual way. They are intertwined with the school's own values and ethos. Because of your proactive approach, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. You are acutely aware of your duty to protect pupils and you know the school's procedures extremely well. Governors take their responsibility to protect pupils very seriously and monitor the strength of safeguarding throughout the school. The processes to recruit staff are secure and the single central record is well maintained.

Leaders, including governors, respond to concerns from parents in a timely and thorough way, undertaking investigations when required. Most parents feel that 'staff are always there for you if you have any concerns or queries'. Leaders conscientiously look for ways to strengthen safeguarding practice and proactively seek advice from the local authority to ensure that pupils' safety is prioritised. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Pupils are adamant that behaviour is good and that bullying is very rare. Pupils understand what bullying is and the different forms that bullying can take. They collectively state that adults will set aside time to talk with them and help to resolve problems they might have. Even

the youngest pupils know that they are able to ask for in-school support, known as 'Thrive', if they are worried about anything. Pupils say that a member of the pupil leadership team, a buddy or a friend will also help them if they need it. Pupils feel safe because they have very strong relationships with each other and are cared for by staff who know them well. One parent succinctly expressed their views by saying: 'Staff have lovely caring natures, and encourage children to do their best'.

Inspection findings

- Pupils have praiseworthy attitudes to learning and try hard to complete their work to a high standard. They are resilient and persevere. Because of this, they doggedly persist when faced with challenging work, especially in mathematics. Pupils' focus on learning helps them to make good progress and these embedded skills prepare them well for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils are well mannered and considerate towards each other. During breaktime pupils of all ages play together and share equipment. Older pupils take their responsibility to care for the youngest children very seriously and do it exceptionally well. This has also been noticed by parents, one of whom wrote: 'Pupils interact with each other positively, with older pupils looking out for the younger ones'. Pupils behave well. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour and fixed-term exclusions are extremely rare.
- Pupils are taught the sounds that letters make, known as phonics, effectively, and as a result they rapidly develop strong early reading skills. Pupils are able to identify digraphs such as 'oa' and trigraphs such as 'air' and 'igh' confidently and use them to accurately spell a wide variety of words. Pupils can use these words in sentences to show that they understand their meaning. They use their phonics knowledge to help them write in a grammatically accurate way. Pupils in Year 2 commonly use suffixes, homophones and possessive apostrophes in their writing because these are embedded within phonics lessons.
- Your focus on using information about how well pupils are doing to ensure that learning is pitched to challenge all pupils has resulted in visibly strong progress in the quality of pupils' writing across the school. Key stage 1 pupils demonstrate that they are able to write sophisticated sentences such as, 'Shyly I turned to the girl and asked her name', and 'She warmly invited me to join her for lunch and I happily agreed'. Children in Reception class also write phonically plausible sentences. For example, a child wrote 'I went to the museum. It had a moving dinosaur there.'
- Pupils' understanding and ability to apply mathematics to reason and problem solve has also improved rapidly. This is because they are given ample opportunities to do so. Pupils say that there are always more challenging activities and tasks for them to do, and so work is rarely too easy. During this inspection, the oldest pupils grappled with a complex mathematical problem. Pretending to be spies observing a suspect, pupils were asked to work out how many photos they would need to take in 24 hours if one photo was taken every time the numeral five displayed on a digital 24-hour clock.
- The curriculum is broad and well balanced. It is enriched by exciting visits

and 'wow' activities that engage and enthuse pupils to want to learn more. Pupils are very appreciative of the stimulating learning opportunities they receive. Parents overwhelmingly agree. Most parents also appreciate the chances their children have to learn outside of the classroom. One parent said: 'My children love to learn and have developed a passion from the staff, who are full of enthusiasm and have gone out of their way to give children fantastic experiences both in school and out, with wonderful memories to look back on.'

- Leaders are committed to equality and have instilled high expectations among all staff for the progress and achievement of disadvantaged pupils. The number of disadvantaged pupils in the school is well below the national average and there are no disadvantaged pupils in some classes. This makes it difficult to compare the outcomes for this group of pupils over time. Some disadvantaged pupils also have special educational needs or disabilities. Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress from their various starting points because their achievement is examined closely by leaders and effective support is put in place when it is needed. The impact of additional government funding is analysed thoroughly to make sure that interventions are making a difference.
- The most able pupils are challenged because work is closely matched to their needs. Their learning is tailored to help them think more deeply and apply what they know in a range of ways. Work in books and observations in lessons evidence the good progress that they make in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children make a good start to their education in the early years. Children are engaged in all areas of learning because the environment is well structured to help them to do so. Children absorb themselves in activities and engage enthusiastically in dialogue with adults, who draw out what they know and deepen their understanding. Children are well behaved and share resources with each other. They have very positive attitudes to learning. Reflecting about her child's experience, a parent wrote: 'She brims with enthusiasm about anything she has learnt'. As a result, the proportion of children reaching the level of achievement expected by the end of Reception Year is above the national average. Children are prepared well for Year 1. Parents greatly appreciate being able to see snapshots of their children's learning via an online log, and 'Ask me cards' help parents to talk to their children about their learning.
- You have high aspirations for pupils' achievement. You have taken account of the fact that standards expected by the end of each academic year have risen. You quickly put in place an assessment system that tracks the progress and achievement of pupils against the new curriculum. Staff use this well to plan lessons that meet the needs of pupils and truly challenge the most able pupils.
- Pupils receive high-quality feedback from teachers that helps them to improve their work. Teachers continuously assess what pupils know and understand to plan the next lesson to match pupils' learning needs carefully. Occasionally, adults do not adapt lessons when pupils are not engaged fully or learning well.

- Strong teaching across the curriculum helps pupils to become immersed in learning and pupils are given increased opportunities to transfer their reading and writing skills across the range of subjects. You know that pupils need even more chances to use and develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills across the curriculum so that their progress and achievement is built on further.
- Pupils enjoy school and rarely miss a day. Thus, attendance is above the national average. No pupils take too many days off school. Pupils consistently arrive on time and are ready to learn.
- Most parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Parents are particularly complimentary about the nurture and care their children receive and the approachability of all staff, who are willing to respond to queries they might have. The majority of parents say their children are happy and safe, and because of this they thrive. A parent enthusiastically explained their child's love of school: 'My child has never said they do not want to go. They count down the days in the holiday to the start of term and much time is spent at home "role-playing" school with my child taking the role of the teacher, whom our child adores.'
- In general, parents are complimentary about your leadership of the school and most parents would recommend the school to other parents. Parents are positive about the school's future as it moves towards more formal collaboration with other schools in the local area. You recognise the importance of continuing to work alongside parents to explore even more ways in which they can support their child's learning and feel fully involved with the school's continued improvement.
- The governing body shares your vision for the future of the school and makes a strong contribution to strategic leadership. They are well informed and knowledgeable about the strengths of the school and what needs to be developed further. They are actively involved in evaluating the work of the school and targeting areas for improvement. They have endeavoured to undertake training to enable them to effectively challenge and support you. Governors discharge their statutory duties well, including those relating to safeguarding.
- You have made sure that the school is increasingly outward looking by uniting with other schools within the Heathfield Area Schools Partnership (HASP) to share good practice and ensure that teachers' assessments about how well pupils are doing are correct. Pupils too have enjoyed increased opportunities to participate in competitive sport with local schools. You realise the value of working in collaboration to improve the overall effectiveness of the school towards outstanding and to provide pupils with even more opportunities to engage with pupils from other schools.
- You have actively sought and welcomed support from the local authority during your tenure as headteacher at the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- ensure that teachers seize every opportunity to practise and embed pupils' writing and mathematics knowledge and skills in other subjects, such as geography and science
- make sure that staff adapt lessons if progress slows
- further develop collaborative work with other schools to share good practice and provide pupils with additional curriculum opportunities
- continue to seek opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning journey and the future direction of the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Abigail Birch
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the phonics lead, and four members of the governing body, including a parent governor. I contacted the local authority to gather officers' views about the effectiveness of the school's work. We visited all classes twice together to see pupils' learning in phonics, writing and mathematics. I spoke to pupils in lessons and on the playground, and met with pupils of all ages formally to gather their views about the school. I looked at pupils' phonics, writing, mathematics and topic books and viewed pupils' work during lessons. I took account of the 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 30 written contributions by parents which were also made online. I also took account of two letters given to me by parents during the inspection and spoke to a parent by telephone. I met a number of parents at the start of the school day. No responses had been made by staff to the online staff questionnaire. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including information about school improvement, pupils' achievement, and the records that leaders keep of concerns, complaints and compliments. I examined first-aid procedures and accident records and examined safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. I also looked at and discussed with you the evaluation of the school's effectiveness.