

14 February 2019

Mrs Judith Gore
Headteacher
St Martin and St Mary Church of England Primary School
Princes Road
Windermere
Cumbria
LA23 2DD

Dear Mrs Gore

Short inspection of St Martin and St Mary Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 31 January 2019, 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

Along with the staff and governors, you have ensured that the school has a warm and welcoming learning environment. You have worked with families to ensure that all children get off to the best possible start to school through the recent introduction of extended provision for two-year-old children. Pupils benefit from a wide and exciting curriculum which utilises many of the wonderful resources locally around the shores of Lake Windermere. The behaviour of the pupils is exemplary. They are polite and well mannered and discuss their learning confidently. The school and gospel values of friendship, love, forgiveness, honesty, trust and faith are embedded in all aspects of learning, and they are highly visible and central to your work.

You have created an incisive school self-evaluation that accurately sets out the many strengths of the school and where improvements need to be made. The school development plan is a detailed document outlining your immediate priorities. You evaluate the plan regularly, ensuring that all staff and governors are aware of what has been achieved and what is still to be done.

Pupils are very positive in their views of the school. They say that behaviour is good and that bullying and name-calling are rare. Pupils say their teachers are fair. They relish the wide range of exciting trips which enrich the curriculum, for example the opportunity to ski in France or to take part in various outdoor and adventurous

activity-based residential trips. Pupils have a good understanding of life in modern Britain. They commemorate Remembrance Day and add their thoughts and prayers to the prayer tree in the school gallery. The wider curriculum challenges pupils to think about the world in which they live and their part in society. Pupils have a keen understanding of democracy and tolerance. They know about different faiths and cultures. The youngest children prepare for Chinese New Year, engaging in a myriad of learning challenges, while the oldest children confidently discussed a recent visit from an Islamic speaker. Pupils are encouraged to think about their health and well-being. For example, a hard-hitting display reminds pupils about the sugar levels found in popular fizzy drinks. Pupils have many opportunities to take on extra responsibilities, which include joining the school or eco council, becoming an e-cadet or training to develop the skills needed to become a sports coach. Pupils enjoy the vast array of extra-curricular sporting opportunities the school offers.

Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. They value the support teachers and staff afford their children. They overwhelmingly support your leadership. Parents reported that behaviour is well managed and that their children are safe in your care. One parent, typical of many, stated, 'The staff go above and beyond to ensure that children are well cared for in every sense.'

Governors are determined to improve the school further. They are aware of the many strengths of the school and the areas that need to be developed further. Governors have ensured that safeguarding procedures within the school are effective. They provide support and strong challenge to you about different aspects of the school's work. Governors have a detailed understanding of the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils because you provide them with detailed information. However, they do not have enough information to challenge you more effectively about the progress and attainment of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

At the time of the previous inspection, the inspectors asked you to improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that pupils had more opportunities to practise their mathematical skills in other subjects. Since then, together with the subject leaders, you have worked successfully to raise the profile of mathematics. You have changed the way mathematics is taught in order to focus more on providing pupils with opportunities to develop practical skills while developing their reasoning skills. Subject leaders have worked with leaders from other schools across the region. They have worked alongside the teachers to train them to plan and apply the new approach to mathematics across the curriculum. From looking in pupils' books, I could see that the teaching of mathematics is a strength of the school. For example, in the early years, children apply their mathematical skills well to construct and measure, while developing their understanding of shape, space and measure. Pupils in key stage 1 use the natural environment to sort and classify natural materials they have found. Pupils in key stage 2 create detailed charts and graphs cataloguing the various creatures found in different habitats around the school site. Pupils' performance information indicates that their progress in mathematics continues to be good for all groups of pupils.

Inspectors also asked you to ensure that teachers better use assessment information to help them plan activities. You have significantly overhauled the systems of assessment used throughout the school. Teachers have embraced these changes well to ensure that teaching sequences lead to pupils' good progress across the curriculum. You have ensured that teachers work in key stage teams to check the quality of pupils' work. As a result, you have created secure systems to check the accuracy of teachers' assessment judgements.

Safeguarding is effective.

As the designated lead for safeguarding, you have ensured that all processes are fit for purpose. You have made thorough checks on the suitability of adults who work in the school. Staff have received up-to-date training in a basic awareness of safeguarding – as well as the 'Prevent' duty training – to help them spot signs of potential radicalisation. Members of staff with whom I spoke were aware of their role in safeguarding pupils. You and two members of the governing body are trained in safer recruitment.

You continue to work effectively with several partner agencies to ensure that pupils remain safe and that vulnerable families receive timely support. Records of referrals to children's social care are detailed. Pupils say they feel safe while in school. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe while on the internet.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I focused on three key lines of enquiry. The first of these related to the provision in school for pupils with SEND. You have put clear plans in place to ensure that the identification of needs is a priority when children first enter the school. Teachers – with the support of the experienced coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND – have ensured that pupils receive additional support which is timely and effective. You make careful checks on the progress of this group of pupils through the analysis of the assessment information. However, this information is not routinely shared with governors. From looking at examples of pupils' work, evidence of additional support and pupils' assessment information, it was clear to see that this group of pupils is making good progress in English and mathematics.
- The second area on which I focused during the inspection related to the progress pupils make in reading. In response to disappointing reading outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2017, you redesigned the way reading is taught. Along with the subject leader for reading, you brokered the support of a specialist adviser to help with this task. You have now embraced a model of whole-class reading as part of the drive to raise standards and increase pupils' expectations. You have provided training for teachers to help them ask more challenging questions to enable pupils to think deeply about their understanding. Reading is promoted well across the school. Two school libraries and rich resources in each classroom ensure that all reading abilities are catered for. Pupils who read to me had books that were well matched to their ability. They were able to discuss their reading habits with confidence. Assessment data indicates that disadvantaged pupils and

pupils with SEND make good progress in reading. However, overall, pupils do not make the same strong progress in reading as they make in writing and mathematics.

- The final area I looked at during the inspection was attendance. Pupils' attendance has been below the national average for several years. You are taking effective action to improve this. For example, at the end of the previous academic year, the overall attendance was just below the national average. However – despite your efforts – the proportion of pupils who were persistently absent rose above the national average. You promote good attendance well through assemblies. You work closely with the action and inclusion officer from the local authority to support vulnerable families. Your own analysis of attendance data shows that school absence is at its highest during September and January. These times coincide with quiet periods in the local tourist industry, in which a significant number of families are employed. Unauthorised holidays during term time have the biggest negative impact on pupils' attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors have detailed information about the progress and attainment of pupils with SEND so that they can challenge school leaders more effectively about the achievement of this group of pupils
- they continue with the changes that have been made to the teaching of reading so that all groups of pupils make better progress, in line with writing and mathematics
- they continue with the relentless efforts to improve overall school attendance and cut the increasing rates of persistent absence.

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

Yours sincerely

John Donald
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I visited classes in each key stage. I looked at examples of pupils' work in the classes visited. I considered the 139 responses to the pupils' survey and the 60 responses to the staff survey. I considered the 46 free-text responses and the 60 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

I met with parents before school and I considered one written response I received from a pupil. I heard pupils from key stages 1 and 2 read. I spoke with pupils informally at lunchtime. I met with seven governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with the subject leaders for mathematics, English and SEND. I met with a representative of the local authority.

I examined a range of school documentation, including the school's single central safeguarding record. I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation and the development plan. I viewed examples of assessment information and documentation in relation to the provision for pupils with SEND.