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Mrs Anita Cubitt
St George's Church of England Primary School, Langton Matravers
High Street
Langton Matravers
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Dear Mrs Cubitt

Short inspection of St George's Church of England Primary School, Langton Matravers

Following my visit to the school on 7 June 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 May 2011.

This school continues to be good.

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

You, supported by the staff and governors, have fostered a positive, inclusive culture in the school that is underpinned by a commitment to Christian values. Pupils enjoy coming to school because they are known and valued as individuals. They are encouraged to achieve their best and are well supported in order to do this. As a result, the school is a happy, optimistic place. This is reinforced by the good relationships that exist between school staff and parents. Staff are accessible to parents and respond promptly to any issues parents might have. As a result, many parents value the openness and warmth of the relationships they share with the school.

Staff are driven by a shared sense of purpose because they understand that learning is the number one priority and have high ambitions for pupils. Consequently, pupils also know the importance of learning, and their behaviour in lessons reflects this. They work hard and stay focused on the task in hand. Pupils who spoke to me said that their learning was challenging but that the teachers made the work 'fun' and 'kid-friendly'.

You and other leaders have maintained some key strengths since the last inspection. Achievement in the early years and key stage 1 continues to be strong, as do reading and writing at key stage 2. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs or disability also achieve well in comparison with their peers in different year groups. However, you acknowledge that achievement in mathematics, and spelling, punctuation and grammar at key stage 2 needs to improve and you have put plans in place to address these issues. You have also made the best use of the school environment, both inside and outside, to stimulate learning and provide attractive spaces where pupils can play or quietly reflect.

You have successfully addressed areas for improvement from the previous inspection. Pupils in different year groups make effective progress because learning is stimulating and fun. This is because teachers plan activities that suit the abilities of children and that are paced appropriately. These activities also take advantage of a range of different resources, including information technology, across different subjects to engage and interest pupils.

The school has also provided a greater range of opportunities for pupils to learn about people from different backgrounds and cultures. Topical news stories, such as the Paris attacks, are worked into assemblies and worship sessions. You told me about the thriving partnership that the school enjoys with a school in Sudan and the fund-raising activities that the pupils organise to support this school. The curriculum is also used to better effect to explore other cultures and beliefs. For instance, pupils told me that in their topic lessons they were studying Brazil because of the upcoming Olympics. They also told me that they learned about empathy, in the context of imagining what life must be like for an earthquake survivor.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff responsible for safeguarding, including the safeguarding governor, are clear about what needs to be in place to ensure that all children are safe. All records and checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are up to date and record the necessary information.

All staff receive appropriate training with regard to, for example, the 'Prevent' duty and homophobic bullying. Governors have also attended necessary training, such as safer recruitment, to ensure that staff joining the school are suitable to work with children.

Records show that any concerns, including referrals to the local authority, are tenaciously followed up and that detailed records are kept securely.

Inspection findings

- You and other leaders have been committed to improving the school since the last inspection. There has been no complacency, despite the school receiving a good judgement at this time, because you realise that there are still areas of the school's work that could be better.

- It is because you provide principled leadership that staff and governors are supportive of your efforts to provide a rounded, high-quality education for all pupils in the school, regardless of their individual circumstances. As a result, staff have high expectations of pupils and share your view that all pupils are entitled to the best quality teaching.
- Leaders are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are open and honest about what needs to improve and have acted swiftly to tackle these areas. For instance, you told me that pupils' attendance and the achievement of pupils in mathematics have not compared well with national averages recently. You outlined the actions that the school had put in place to address the issues.
- Governors are now providing strong leadership. After a recent period of instability, the board is now fired up once again with a renewed sense of purpose. Board members understand their roles and responsibilities; they know the importance of providing a high level of challenge and support for school leaders. For example, governors have been instrumental in driving efforts to improve attendance. Minutes of recent meetings show that governors are persistent in asking important questions that hold you to account.
- You and other staff in the school are well supported by the school evaluation partner (SEP), a representative of the local authority. The SEP understands the key areas of the school that require improvement, notably mathematics in key stage 2, and has provided you with advice to improve pupils' progress.
- Attendance has been below the national average recently. You and governors have focused relentlessly upon improving this by working more closely with local schools and explaining to parents why attendance is important. The work has paid off; pupils' attendance is now in line with the national average.
- You have also focused intensively on improving the achievement of pupils in mathematics at key stage 2, particularly the most able. Staff have received training to improve their subject knowledge and there is now greater emphasis on developing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. In addition, teachers are quicker to provide pupils with extension and higher order thinking tasks to move them on if they find the work too easy. As a result, pupils are making greater progress in mathematics at key stage 2. However, you acknowledge that the teaching of mathematics could be improved further to enable pupils to make more rapid progress.
- Different groups of pupils make good progress across the school. Disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs, and boys and girls all receive the support they require in order to succeed in their various subjects and in different year groups.
- All the parents who responded to the Parent View online survey strongly agreed that the school is well led and managed. All respondents would recommend the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- further action is taken to improve the progress pupils make in mathematics, by:
 - teachers routinely checking that pupils have acted upon the advice they have received to improve their work
 - all pupils taking pride in the presentation of their work and setting it out appropriately
 - more closely measuring the impact of the mathematics action plan in terms of pupils' progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke to you, pupils, representatives of the governing body and the school evaluation partner. You and I made short visits to lessons to observe pupils' attitudes to learning and I also scrutinised work in pupils' books.

A wide range of documentary evidence was considered, which included the school action plan, governors' minutes, the mathematics action plan, and attendance and safeguarding records.