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Mr Robert Barnes
Headteacher
Wylve Valley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
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Dear Mr Barnes

Short inspection of Wylve Valley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 December 2017, 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Following your appointment in January 2016, you have worked effectively with other leaders, including governors. You have ensured that pupils enjoy a school where the values of 'love, care and respect' resonate and are reflected in its culture. Pupils are happy and proud to be a part of Wylve Valley primary. Since you took up the post, you have listened to pupils, staff and parents who typically agree that you have built well on the school's strengths. For example, a parent who completed the online survey wrote, 'Since the change of the headteacher, this school has turned around.' Another wrote, 'This is a wonderful school. My child is thriving and making huge progress.'

The quality of education provided by the school is good. You ensure that the needs of pupils, including the most able and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, are well met. Teachers plan work that is well matched to different pupils' needs so that it challenges and motivates them. Pupils are taught how to be evaluative and work well together to improve their own work. For example, children in the Reception Year help each other with their daily phonics work. They are gaining independence and resilience to be effective learners. Your expectations of teachers, including 'non-negotiables' are well established so that teaching, learning and assessment are well organised and consistently strong in the school.

You have taken effective action to tackle the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. You have concentrated well on the quality of teaching so that pupils, including the most able, are challenged appropriately. However, you are not complacent and still want to ensure further improvements for the pupils. For example, you recognise that plans for pupils who need to catch up are not always precise enough. They sometimes lack critical milestones, measures or time-scales. This slows the progress of a few pupils.

You and other leaders know that there are some key areas that must remain a further focus for improvement, in particular the need to accelerate pupils' progress in reading and writing in key stage 2. Although pupils enjoy reading, they do not always show an understanding of more complex words and phrases. Furthermore, pupils sometimes make repeated errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar in their writing. These are not always consistently identified or tackled well enough when pupils edit and correct their work. Consequently, some pupils do not reach the standards of which they are capable in writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and other leaders, including governors, ensure that mandatory training, checks and pre-employment vetting arrangements are robust and effective. For example, governors check the single central record, including for volunteers, so that you are knowledgeable and fully briefed on all those who work with the pupils. You have followed the advice of your local authority adviser to complete the annual safeguarding audit. In this way, the leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

The culture of safeguarding pupils is strong. You and your staff are tenacious and know what to do to keep pupils safe. You are diligent and take timely action to respond to pupils' needs. The strong ethos that you have developed with staff has an impact beyond the school's gates. For example, you check the circumstances if pupils do not join or start in your school following an agreed admission date. This is reflective of the culture that permeates the school and the belief that safeguarding is the responsibility of all. As a consequence, pupils said that they feel safe and enjoy coming to school. They know how to stay safe and said that they trust the adults in the school to look after them.

Inspection findings

- My first key line of enquiry focused on pupils' progress in reading. This is because, in 2017, outcomes for pupils fell below the national average, including pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2. Together with other leaders, you have been quick to recognise this and have taken immediate action to address it. A key part of your work has been to ensure that teachers closely check pupils' reading every half term. Teachers' checks and their evaluation of pupils' progress are reported to you. This leads to in-depth professional discussions about individual pupils and informs next steps in how to ensure that teaching meets

their needs. As a result, teachers are identifying vulnerable pupils sooner and helping them catch up.

- In response to the disappointing results in 2017, leaders have been proactive in re-visiting and refreshing their approach to reading. This has led to a strong culture of reading where it is celebrated and enjoyed across the school day. For example, pupils enjoy having 'buddy readers', and poetry is shared during assembly. Pupils told me that they enjoy reading and have plenty of opportunities to read for a variety of purposes, for example the current 'Advent books' initiative, when pupils share a different book each day in the run-up to Christmas.
- Leaders have introduced a structured approach to daily guided reading sessions. This is ensuring that pupils are being taught reading skills by teachers and teaching assistants with rigour and a sense of urgency. Pupils enjoy the range of skills being covered, for example further research skills on the computer. However, some elements of the guided reading sessions are not consistently effective, especially when pupils are not in an adult-led group.
- We agreed that pupils read well and are being motivated and encouraged to read for a variety of purposes. However, pupils are still sometimes held back by a lack of confidence in knowing and using a more extensive vocabulary. You are rightly targeting this because some pupils do not always understand the words and phrases they are reading and have a limited vocabulary for understanding and comprehension.
- My second key line of enquiry evaluated how well pupils are progressing in their writing, especially in key stage 2. This is because pupils' progress in writing assessments has been static over the past couple of years with little sign of any improvement. You and your English subject leader have rightly targeted writing as a priority. You have delivered effective training and professional development to teachers so that they have a good understanding of how to build writing sequences for pupils. Workbooks show that teachers tailor work to suit pupils' individual needs. This is helping pupils to gain writing skills in a coherent and logical progression.
- There is a high volume of purposeful writing across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have written extensively about the Stuarts and events in 1666. Pupils are challenged to write for a variety of reasons, which is helping them to gain confidence and to deepen their skills.
- Teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough to ensure that pupils can meet the highest standards of which they are capable. For example, we found that some pupils, who are capable to do so, do not join their handwriting. Most notably, however, there are times when pupils are held back because inconsistencies in spelling, punctuation and grammar are not tackled. Pupils are not being supported to make best use of their editing skills to evaluate and then improve the overall quality of their writing.
- My third line of enquiry evaluated the effectiveness of all leaders and managers to be able to sustain improvement. This concentrated on the role of senior leaders and also the impact of governors in identifying and tackling priorities. You

work well with an effective governing body. Governors visit the school and have a good knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses. They use information well to hold you to account and ask relevant questions about performance and impact of strategies. For example, in evaluating the school's use of the pupil premium grant, they know what is working for the pupils and have taken steps to re-commission effective support.

- Other leaders, including subject leaders, have a secure understanding of the school's priorities and are taking effective action to tackle weaknesses. They are given the time they need to monitor their subjects, which is used to plan the right professional development to meet the ongoing needs of staff. However, as we discussed, monitoring does not always focus sufficiently on the progress of vulnerable pupils. This sometimes slows their rates of improvement.
- You and other leaders have worked tirelessly to implement a broad and balanced curriculum. This enthuses the pupils and enables them to make links across subjects and to make wider contributions to the school's work, for example, through fund raising. The extensive range of after-school clubs is valued by pupils and parents alike who appreciate the efforts of staff in running events. These have a positive impact on pupils' attendance and enjoyment, especially that of disadvantaged pupils, whose attendance is improving well.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they improve:

- pupils' reading skills by deepening and extending their vocabulary
- pupils' editing skills to correct spelling, punctuation and grammar in their writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Stewart Gale
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We agreed the timetable and activities at the start of the inspection. I worked extensively with you, including reviewing pupils' books and progress together. I scrutinised safeguarding records and we discussed a wide range of matters related to safeguarding, including staff recruitment, training and vetting arrangements. I reviewed evidence that shows how you work with other agencies to keep children safe. Together, we visited all classes across the school. We scrutinised a sample of pupils' workbooks and I spoke with pupils in line with our agreed key lines of

enquiry. I also met with representatives of the governing body and reviewed school documents, including the school's self-evaluation summary and records of governors' visits. I also held a discussion with the local authority adviser. I took full account of the 14 responses to Parent View as well as other surveys, including the 12 free-texts received for the inspection. I spoke with pupils and took account of the 15 pupil and 12 staff responses to the online survey.