

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



1 October 2018

Miss Catherine Vardy
Headteacher
Bishops Cannings Church of England Aided Primary School
The Street
Bishop's Cannings
Devizes
Wiltshire
SN10 2LD

Dear Miss Catherine Vardy

Short inspection of Bishops Cannings Church of England Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 18 September 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 November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

Since your appointment in September 2017, you have led with vision and determination, building on the legacy of strong and supportive relationships between all members of the school community. You have taken decisive action to address the weaker aspects of teaching which contributed to the disappointing outcomes for key stage 2 pupils in 2018 statutory assessments. These very recent assessment outcomes were affected adversely by a relatively high number of pupils joining the school in the final year of primary school. However, you recognise that, over time, too few pupils have achieved the higher standards, especially in reading and writing.

Together with governors, you have reviewed leadership roles within the staff team and have increased the responsibilities of middle leaders. This includes the appointment of a leader to oversee the progress that disadvantaged pupils make. The leadership team and governors share your determination to improve teaching further. Leaders at all levels recognise that precisely defined improvements to pupils' progress are now the primary focus of their improvement plans and their checks on teaching.

From January 2018, the school has grown to include nursery-aged pupils onto its roll. This development has helped the nursery and school to work more closely and to provide effective transition for children into the Reception class. Highly skilled staff in the school and nursery share good practice in teaching. The nursery is a stimulating environment; pupils settle quickly to tasks and sustain their interest when playing and learning. Strong teaching helps children to develop their curiosity and to speak confidently.

Pupils are proud to attend Bishops Cannings School. They behave extremely well and take great pride in sharing their work with a visitor. Those I spoke to told me that they enjoy a range of subjects and relish the opportunities to take on additional responsibilities, such as belonging to the school council. The school's Christian values of caring for each other and serving the community permeate all aspects of school life. Pupils told me that everyone is treated fairly in their school, 'because of the Golden Rule' and that the school's values 'help us to be kind'. They told me that bullying is extremely rare and that they trust adults to keep them safe by resolving issues quickly. Almost all parents who spoke with and wrote to me, or commented on Parent View, appreciate the school's leadership and teaching. One parent wrote, about their children, 'We could not have wished for a more rounded, caring education.'

The previous inspection asked leaders to improve the teaching of writing. Current pupils' workbooks show that they write with increasing grammatical accuracy and apply spelling rules across a range of texts. I investigated the progress that the most able pupils make in writing across key stage 2 as a key line of enquiry.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders and governors work closely together to promote the welfare and safeguarding of pupils. You make sure that all staff understand their responsibilities to identify pupils at risk and report concerns, which are followed up swiftly with relevant agencies. You make sure that training is up to date in areas such as recent statutory advice about the risk of peer-to-peer abuse. Following your own audit of safeguarding practices and training, you have increased the number of trained safeguarding leads in school. All checks on staff and volunteers who work with children are in place. We discussed a small number of administrative omissions which do not put pupils at risk, but may prevent leaders from checking that actions have been taken and communicated appropriately.

Inspection findings

- We investigated the progress that the most able pupils make in writing in key stage 2. In recent years, too few pupils have reached the higher standard and the progress of the most able pupils has been variable. Current pupils' workbooks reflect the positive actions leaders have taken to address this weakness. Teachers provide the most able pupils with engaging opportunities to write at length across a range of subjects, including science and history. In addition,

teachers have improved their use of assessments of what pupils can and cannot do to set more challenging tasks. Most-able pupils also benefit from receiving more specific information on how to edit and improve their writing. Teaching of the basic skills of fluent handwriting and accuracy in spelling has also improved the overall quality of writing seen in workbooks across key stage 2. Consequently, the most able pupils are now making better progress.

- Second, I explored how middle-attaining pupils in key stage 2 are progressing in reading. Over time, this group made inconsistent progress and too few pupils have progressed to the highest standard. Leaders have taken action to overcome this by improving the quality of reading materials, which is now encouraging pupils to be enthusiastic readers and so develop their fluency. In addition, you have made thorough assessments of pupils' comprehension skills and provided training to help teachers and teaching assistants to question pupils more effectively.
- The positive impact of these changes is evident in the strong teaching of reading comprehension that we observed in upper key stage 2 classes. Leaders are now increasingly ensuring that pupils across all classes are routinely challenged to think more deeply about what they read. Furthermore, you identify rightly the need to provide challenge to middle-ability pupils so that more can achieve the highest standard. We agreed that in order to build on the improvements made, leaders' plans and monitoring activities need to be more closely linked to this priority.
- Finally, I explored the effectiveness of the strategy to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1. This is because a small number of disadvantaged pupils in recent years have not made enough progress at the end of key stage 1, despite strong starting points in reading, writing and phonics. You have provided additional support for such pupils to catch up in their reading. Current pupils' workbooks show they receive effective support to help them apply their phonics when spelling unfamiliar words. In addition, teachers give opportunities for frequent practice of letter formation and handwriting. As a result, disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 are now making better progress.
- Leaders have well-founded plans for the use of the school's additional pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. However, these plans do not link well enough to precise outcomes for pupils' progress and development. As a result, governors have not been able to measure the effectiveness of their actions, or to check if pupils are making enough progress in key stage 1.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- planning and monitoring activities ensure that middle-ability pupils are more routinely challenged to think more deeply about what they read
- leaders at all levels check more precisely how their plans are impacting on outcomes for pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils.

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

Claire Mirams
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke to parents at the start of the day. I visited the school's nursery provision and spoke with the nursery leader. I held meetings with you and your leadership team. We reviewed your plans for improvement, information on current pupils' progress and your own evaluation of the school's performance. We observed teaching together. I also met with members of the governing body and scrutinised minutes of governing body meetings.

I met with a group of pupils and discussed their viewpoints on the curriculum, behaviour, bullying and keeping safe, including online. I scrutinised various safeguarding records and current information about school attendance. I spoke to a representative of Wiltshire local authority on the telephone. I reviewed a range of pupils' workbooks.

I also considered 72 responses to the pupil survey, 23 responses to the staff survey, two letters from parents and 53 parent responses to the online survey, Parent View.