

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



24 December 2015

Mr Paul Walker
Executive Headteacher
Hawkchurch Church of England Primary School
Hawkchurch
Axminster
EX13 5XD

Dear Mr Walker

Short inspection of Hawkchurch Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 November 2015, 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 March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

- You use your detailed understanding of the needs of pupils, staff and the community at Hawkchurch Church of England Primary School to drive rapid improvement in the quality of education at the school. You and the head of teaching and learning have established a very welcoming and caring culture which pupils say is 'like a big family'. Despite significant changes in leadership, governance and teaching in the past two years, the quality of education and pupils' achievement remains good. Governors are ambitious for the school and have taken decisive action to secure its future success. The strong leadership demonstrated by you, the interim headteacher, governors and staff illustrate the school's collective capacity for further improvements.
- Governors' frequent visits to the school enable them to check on the impact of actions identified in the school development plan. Each governor has an area of responsibility identified in the plan on which they report back to the full governing body once every half term. As a result, all governors hold a detailed understanding of the impact of leaders' actions. For example, they are aware of the positive way that Friday assemblies to celebrate pupils' achievements are involving parents more in the life of the school. The governing body is making an effective contribution to the overall leadership of the school. Minutes of its

meetings illustrate a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for development.

Safeguarding is effective.

- The school carefully implements its agreed safeguarding policies and procedures. All staff know each pupil and their needs exceptionally well. Staff act as role models for pupils in the way they talk, act and behave to each other. Leaders and staff follow up all concerns to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive the support they need. This is evident, for example, when a new family joins the school. Detailed liaison with the previous school, support from external agencies and a carefully designed induction plan help ensure that the children settle quickly. Most significantly, pupils already attending the school welcome new arrivals with care, thought and compassion. As one said, 'It's how we would want to be welcomed, because it must be scary for them.'
- The school's safeguarding records are thorough and show the school's emphasis on ensuring that all issues are fully resolved. The positive culture of keeping all pupils safe is illustrated by pupils' strong ability to say what it means to feel safe. They reported, 'This school's a family...we feel part of it.' 'We're happy here, looked after and cared for...you can always rely on a teacher.' 'We are taught about safety in lessons, especially fire safety.'
- You, the administrator and governors ensure that all recruitment procedures and checks are carried out. Training for all staff is frequent, detailed and up to date, enabling them to carry out their duties effectively. A recent external audit of your safeguarding arrangements by the local authority reflects your ongoing commitment to this area of work and confirmed the good practice you have in place. Recent training on the government's 'Prevent' strategy provides you with a good understanding of how to keep pupils safe from the risk of exposure to extreme views.

Inspection findings

- Children achieve well. For the past two years all children achieved a good level of development at the end of Reception and the standard expected in the Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds they make) assessment. In 2014, the local authority correctly identified a drop in standards at Key Stage 2 and intervened before any fall-off could become entrenched. The interim headteacher successfully redressed this decline last year with a sharp focus on delivering high-quality teaching. Evidence from pupils' work at that time and school data show that almost every one of the 24 pupils made good or better progress during the last academic year. This good progress has accelerated further this term, particularly for the very small number of disadvantaged pupils. Current pupils' progress is rapid because of the high-quality teaching and excellent individual attention

they receive. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is therefore improving faster than the national rate. All pupils in Year 2 and 6 are on track to meet the expected standard or above in 2016. This represents pupils' good and improving academic progress from their starting points.

- The restructuring of the leadership arrangements at the school is enabling all to focus on the core purpose of teaching and learning. You have been active in using the expertise from the Two Valleys Federation of Schools to develop teachers' skills in checking and moderating work. Judgements are benchmarked with other more experienced leaders. As a result, teachers are using their enhanced knowledge to plan appropriate activities that meet the needs of most pupils well. On occasions, some tasks do not stretch the most-able pupils or test their understanding or mastery of the concept being covered in sufficient depth.
- The head of teaching and learning is playing a very active role in driving school improvement. Her use of a range of indicators such as lesson observations, work scrutiny, pupil and parental views provides an informed view of the quality of teaching and learning. These internal indicators are regularly checked with other schools in the federation to test and agree the accuracy of judgements. You have reorganised staff meetings to focus explicitly on training for teaching and learning. Individual coaching and mentoring plans to support practice are provided where any areas of weakness are identified.
- This is a harmonious school community where all staff share your drive to make things even better. They understand the part they play in securing improvements. This is illustrated in the way the school development plan aligns accurately with staff performance targets. There is, therefore, a close link made when judging a teacher's performance and their impact on the standards that pupils reach and the progress they make. Teachers are held to account for the progress of pupils in their classes through half-termly one-to-one 'standards' meetings.
- One of the keys to the school's success is in the careful design and delivery of the curriculum. The school's core values of kind-heartedness, mutual respect, honesty and self-reliance permeate all aspects of its work. Pupils understand these values and demonstrate them on a daily basis through their interactions with each other and with adults, including visitors to the school. The curriculum is also successful in developing pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual understanding. For example, pupils' thoughtful analyses of the words to *Lord of the Dance* developed their deeper understanding well. Pupils strengthen their knowledge of different cultures through participation in charitable collections, for example to support the Shoe Box appeal.
- Pupils' good behaviour, enthusiasm and positive outlook towards learning play a strong part in the good progress they are making. They arrive punctually and settle quickly to their work or when changing activities because they enjoy learning. Their developing understanding of the value

of personal responsibility and their respect for the views of others mean that all feel comfortable expressing their ideas and opinions. Parents who spoke with me while bringing their children to school were overwhelmingly positive about the school. They particularly welcome the personal, face-to-face approach they receive from the head of teaching and learning.

- Your chosen approach to developing pupils' writing is proving successful. Work in pupils' books shows an increasingly sophisticated use of vocabulary such as adverbial phrases to describe scenes. Displays around the school show that pupils' skills when drafting, editing and refining their work are producing more high-quality pieces of writing. Pupils' core skills are also being developed across other subjects. For example, pupils develop a good understanding of writing newspaper reports when learning about the Loch Ness Monster. However, pupils do not always apply their knowledge of spelling rules in their writing. Therefore, basic errors are evident in some pupils' books.
- Teachers probe pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts and develop their mathematical reasoning well. Open and searching questions prompt pupils to justify their answers and are used well to check their understanding. Occasionally, learning falters when planned activities 'jump' between topics and do not develop pupils' deeper understanding of mathematical concepts.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the most-able pupils are sufficiently challenged so that they reach the highest levels
- teachers plan appropriate activities that develop pupils' deeper conceptual understanding in mathematics to meet the requirements of the new national curriculum
- pupils in Years 5 and 6 use their knowledge of spelling rules to improve their writing.

Yours sincerely

Richard Light
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the head of teaching and learning, all staff, pupils, eight parents, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors. I also spoke with a representative of the local authority. I accompanied you and the head of teaching

and learning on visits to lessons and together we looked at work in pupils' books during these visits. I looked at the survey results from 'Parent View', the online questionnaire for parents. I met with a group of eight pupils from Years 3 to 6 to discuss their work and gain their views of the school. I evaluated the accuracy of your self-evaluation and reviewed a range of other documentation. I checked the effectiveness of your safeguarding arrangements and recruitment information.