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Miss Margaret Amery
Headteacher
Latchingdon Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
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Dear Miss Amery

Short inspection of Latchingdon Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 June 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in February 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your clear focus and vision underpin the positive work of the school. Together with your experienced deputy headteacher, you have created a harmonious, safe and caring school. Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. Parents agree that the school provides a safe and caring environment. They are positive about the quality of teaching and agree that their children make good progress.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They have positive attitudes towards their learning and enjoy their lessons. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and, as a result, pupils feel confident to ask for support if needed. Pupils work well together in class and help one another. Teachers have high aspirations for pupils and expect them to try hard in lessons and behave appropriately. As a result, classrooms are productive working areas enabling pupils to make progress.

Since the last inspection, the school has joined the Vine Schools Trust. This is seen as a positive step by yourself and the governors. The trust has provided the school with a good level of support through staff training opportunities and joint working with other schools. As a result, you have been able to develop practices within the school that have led to continued improvement.

You have a realistic view of the school's strengths and areas for development. You

ensure that information about pupils' progress is carefully analysed, enabling you to provide personalised support programmes for pupils who are falling behind in their learning. The governing body is well informed about pupils' progress, and governors' systems for monitoring standards within the school ensure that they have an accurate view of the school's performance. They provide a good balance of support and challenge.

Children in the early years continue to make good progress. This is because teaching is well matched to their needs, and activities are interesting. Adults have high expectations of the children and support them effectively, so they are able to make good progress. I saw some excellent examples of Reception children's writing and mathematics. By the end of the Reception Year, children are ready to cope with the more formal teaching in key stage 1.

Since the previous inspection, you have made major changes to the teaching of writing. As a result, most pupils currently in the school are producing good-quality written work. Pupils in all year groups are able to write at length and with a greater accuracy in punctuation, grammar and spelling. Progress in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2 is particularly strong.

You have also reviewed how mathematics is taught. Pupils are now provided with more opportunities to develop their reasoning skills through a greater variety of activities. Pupils are now more confident in tackling mathematical problems and this is leading to improved progress. Pupils say they enjoy mathematics lessons.

Safeguarding is effective.

You give high priority to ensuring that pupils are kept safe and are well looked after. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The overwhelming majority of pupils agree that they are safe and well cared for in school.

Pupils say that bullying happens on occasions but it is dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils agree that there is an adult in school they can talk to and they told me that staff also help them with problems outside school. The curriculum provides pupils with plenty of opportunities to learn about keeping safe in a variety of situations. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.

Leaders ensure that the appropriate checks are carried out on staff and volunteers before they are employed. All staff are well trained and knowledgeable, enabling them to quickly spot and deal with any concerns quickly. Pupils are supervised well at break and lunchtimes.

Governors and members of the trust check that safeguarding procedures are robust. You work effectively with outside agencies to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable pupils.

Inspection findings

- To establish whether the school remained good, I looked at various aspects of your work. First, I looked at the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, especially across key stage 2. I chose this because the progress of disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 2 has been variable and their attainment has lagged behind that of their classmates and other pupils nationally. Inspection evidence indicates that most disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making strong progress, although their attainment remains below average in some areas.
- I also looked at the support you are providing for pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour. I chose this because in 2016 the proportion of pupils who received fixed-term exclusions was above average. You had already identified this as an area for improvement and have taken effective action to reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions.
- Teachers have received specialised training in supporting pupils with challenging behaviour. Pupils have also received support from behaviour specialist teachers. As a result, the few pupils who once found it difficult to control their emotions and behaviour are more settled in school. These pupils rarely disrupt lessons and are now able to socialise with other pupils without adult support or intervention.
- Phonics teaching and outcomes were a focus for this inspection, because the proportion of pupils leaving Year 2 having met the required standard has been below average for three years. Together, we visited lessons where phonics was being taught and agreed that staff have good subject knowledge. They use it well to make sure that pupils pronounce sounds accurately. Activities are interesting and, as a result, pupils enjoy learning. Phonics teaching is strong and pupils currently in the school are progressing well.
- I listened to a group of pupils who have weaker phonics skills read. All of the pupils were able to use their understanding of letter sounds to break down unfamiliar words in order to read them. The pupils enjoy reading, read at home and have the ability to read books suitable for their age.
- The proportion of pupils persistently absent from school has been well above average for at least two years. You have rightly prioritised attendance as an area for school improvement. Your dedicated support staff carefully monitor attendance and work with both the family and outside agencies to improve attendance. Their work is beginning to have an impact on reducing persistent absence, but you acknowledge that improving attendance remains a high priority for the school.
- There is still a significant minority of parents who do not recognise the negative impact of irregular or long periods of absence on their child's progress. This was evident in the books of poor attenders looked at by the deputy head and me during the inspection.
- Together with the class teachers, I looked at the work pupils produce in subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils have opportunities to develop their writing skills across some subjects, especially religious education and history. However, teachers do not have the same high expectations of pupils in these subjects as they do in English and mathematics. Teachers are not setting work

that is sufficiently demanding, as it often requires pupils to complete simple activities, such as to list facts. This does not enable pupils to develop their subject knowledge and understanding so that they have a firm foundation to build upon as they move into secondary school. You agreed that this is an area for improvement for the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- work in subjects such as history, geography and science is more ambitious in order to provide pupils with the opportunity to develop their subject knowledge and understanding
- a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress
- persistent absence is reduced so that it is no higher than the national average.

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

Yours sincerely

Caroline Pardy
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held discussions with you, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. I also met with two members of the governing body and the chief executive of the trust. I visited classrooms with you and the deputy headteacher to evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and to talk informally with them about their experiences of the school. I looked at work in pupils' exercise books to review the quality of pupils' work over time. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school, in lessons and at lunchtime. I spoke to a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6. I also listened to a group of Year 2 pupils read.

I considered your improvement plan, self-evaluation and policies relating to behaviour and keeping pupils safe. I checked the documents on the website. I considered the views of 12 parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including two free-text responses. I also took account of the seven responses to the staff questionnaire and the views of the 17 pupils who completed the pupil questionnaire.