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Mr Neil Baker
Headteacher
Christ Church Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
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Dear Mr Baker

Short inspection of Christ Church Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 November 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.

You, together with the deputy headteacher, have created a welcoming and positive environment. You take pride in a curriculum that is designed to interest pupils and develop a breadth of knowledge and experiences. Your self-evaluation is accurate, and you have clearly outlined your priorities, with appropriate strategies in place to achieve these. Staff are encouraged to be reflective about their own and each other's practice. This is integral to your approach as you continue to develop the quality of teaching and learning at the school. You are outward looking and have worked effectively with other schools to develop and share pedagogy. You recognise the importance of encouraging teachers to talk about their approaches and ideas and are considerate of staff's well-being.

Governors are equally committed to the success of the school. They have the knowledge and expertise to ask the right questions to support and challenge leaders. They have developed their approach to ensure that they regularly visit the school and meet with staff, so that they have first-hand knowledge of the standard of education the school provides. The information provided by school leaders has the clarity to support this understanding. Consequently, governors are knowledgeable about all aspects of the school's work.

Reading remains a strength and you have made notable improvements to the proportion of pupils who achieve the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. Pupils enjoy reading both in school and at home and like to make recommendations to their peers through the 'Weekly Moo', a publication written by Year 5 and Year 6 pupils that is shared across the school.

Children achieve well in the early years foundation stage and this continues as they move through key stage 1. However, you recognise that the progress pupils make by the end of Year 6 is not as secure in writing and mathematics as it is in reading. Your work to improve the quality of writing has led to improvements, but this has not been as successful in mathematics, where progress remains below that seen nationally.

At the previous inspection, leaders were asked to develop the use of assessment. In response, you have refined systems that track the progress pupils are making and this is used to identify the barriers that exist to learning. As a result, you have a greater understanding of the patterns of pupils' progress across the school and have taken steps to remedy this where it is not as strong as you would like it to be. In addition, you were asked to improve the teaching of phonics, grammar, punctuation and spelling and the actions you have taken have led to an improvement in these areas. However, you recognise that teachers' use of assessment is not embedded and, therefore, is not consistently used to plan learning that matches the ability of pupils. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils, those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and the most able do not perform as well as their peers.

There is no doubt that you know pupils well and are justifiably proud of the work of the 'learning lodge' and inclusion team to support pupils and families who are considered to be vulnerable. There is now a closer alignment between meeting the social and emotional needs of pupils with the support they need to improve their academic performance.

Safeguarding is effective.

You are conscientious about the approach to safeguarding, and staff are meticulous in their record keeping. All staff, and governors, receive appropriate training and are confident in how to report concerns. When referrals are made, staff are informed that action has been taken and pastoral leaders respond swiftly to issues. Staff work effectively with external agencies and ensure that there is a rigorous follow-up when they are not satisfied with the resolution of a referral. Employment checks are thorough to ensure that all staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school, and parents and carers and staff agree that this is a strong aspect of the school's work. Furthermore, pupils are positive when speaking about the way in which the school supports their personal and social development. They can talk confidently about the way that they debate topical issues and understand concepts such as democracy from their work on the Ancient Greeks. They regularly vote for representatives for the school council and for

presenters on the school's radio station. Older pupils encourage younger pupils to express their viewpoints. Pupils know how to stay healthy and safe, including when using the internet.

Pupils recognise the importance of positive relationships and exemplify these in their interactions with adults and with each other. Pupils are welcoming and polite, holding open doors and greeting visitors to their classrooms. They say that behaviour is good and respond well to the praise they receive. This is shown by the way that they like to see their efforts recognised on the 'chart of awesomeness'. They say that bullying is rare and can see the difference between this and pupils having disagreements. Pupils say that they can talk freely with teachers and have 'absolute trust' in their teachers to deal with issues.

Inspection findings

- At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed on the key lines of enquiry. The first of these focused on the effectiveness of teaching and learning to support pupils to make good progress in key stage 2 in writing and mathematics. We particularly scrutinised the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND who, over recent years, have not achieved as well as their peers.
- Leaders are aware of the performance of these two groups and are working effectively to develop teachers' practice to ensure that the needs of pupils are better met. Additional interventions, led by teaching assistants, focus on gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding to support them to catch up with their classmates. Leaders have an improving knowledge of the effectiveness of these sessions and can demonstrate gains in the short term. However, teachers do not build on these sufficiently, which means that progress is not improved over the longer term.
- Leaders are introducing systems to provide a better overview of the support that pupils with SEND receive. However, at present, the monitoring of this is not rigorous enough to ensure that agreed strategies are implemented in the classroom. Teachers do not routinely design well-matched activities to help pupils with SEND access tasks at the appropriate level. Teachers' guidance is often too generic and does not pinpoint the essential skills that will improve the standard of work that pupils produce. Where misconceptions are not identified, pupils continue to make the same errors, and this hampers their ability to express themselves successfully in writing or build on their mathematical understanding.
- Leaders acknowledge the importance of improving the progress that disadvantaged pupils make. To this end, the pastoral team meets regularly to plan for pupils who require additional support. This facilitates high-quality intervention and targeted support for pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural needs. There is a clear ambition to engage pupils and their families in the life of the school and this is reflected in the development of the 'community space'. However, this has not yet resulted in improved academic progress for this group of pupils by the end of Year 6. Crucially, while leaders have identified the barriers that exist for disadvantaged pupils and have taken

actions to address these, the evaluation of the impact of these strategies is not precise enough.

- The second line of enquiry centred on how effectively teachers challenge pupils to achieve the highest standards. The most able pupils achieve well by the end of the early years foundation stage and Year 2, but this progress is not sustained as pupils move through key stage 2. Where teaching is appropriately targeted, pupils demonstrate an ability to write with fluency and increasing sophistication. They use their learning from other areas of the curriculum as a stimulus to support their compositions. They use adventurous vocabulary and vary sentence structures to create effect. In mathematics, pupils demonstrate a secure arithmetical understanding and are able to articulate their methodology, using appropriate subject terminology.
- Where teaching is not as assured, pupils are not challenged to achieve greater finesse when they write for a variety of audiences and purpose. Pupils demonstrate that they have the right technical understanding, but do not apply this knowledge independently so that they can show that they are working convincingly at the highest standards. In mathematics, pupils do not move on quickly enough even when they are ready to do so. In some cases, the sequence of learning does not allow pupils to build on their prior knowledge because they are not directed to a suitable starting point. When pupils choose for themselves, they often complete work that is too easy for them. This means that they do not reach the more complex problem-solving and reasoning activities that will require them to apply their understanding at greater depth.
- The final line of enquiry was to determine how well all leaders are taking the necessary steps towards achieving the school's priorities. Improvement plans give a detailed commentary on the actions taken to raise standards further. These plans are thorough but, at times, lack the necessary precision to gauge whether strategies have had the intended effect. You have recognised the need to create a greater distribution of responsibility, so that the school has the capacity to improve further. Middle leaders have initiated changes that have led to improvement and are well placed to continue this more widely. They appreciate the training they have received to support them to fulfil their roles effectively. They understand the school's priorities and work with their teams to provide the appropriate training. However, there are still inconsistencies in the way in which teachers apply agreed policies, and this leads to variation in the quality of classroom practice. Therefore, middle leaders do not challenge and hold teachers to account with sufficient rigour.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvement plans have clear, measurable targets with identified timescales, so that leaders and governors judge the impact of their actions more precisely

- teachers use assessment to identify misconceptions and plan activities that match the learning needs of all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND
- teachers routinely challenge the most able pupils to achieve the highest standards
- middle leaders continue to develop their skills, so that they can support leaders to secure further improvement.

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

Sarah McGinnis
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

At the beginning of the day, I met with you and the deputy headteacher to agree key lines of enquiry. Following this, together we visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' written work across a range of subjects and age groups. We met with representatives from the governing body, curriculum leaders, pastoral managers and pupils. I also scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school, including policies relating to safeguarding. When making final judgements, I considered 99 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, 27 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire and 101 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire for pupils.