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Ms Helen Faulkner
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Dear Ms Faulkner

Short inspection of St Werburgh's Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 December 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The new team is resolute in helping pupils at the school to 'strive for excellence'.

Parents are overwhelmingly happy with the education that the school provides. All who gave a view would recommend the school and say that their children make good progress. They also speak highly of how secure and happy children are, a typical comment being: 'This school is very well led and is at the heart of our community. My children love coming every day.' Other comments refer to how well staff know children: 'It's like a village school in the middle of a city.'

You have worked to ensure that staff, including several new members of staff, are clear about expectations and the school's approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. Your focus last year on reading saw changes to the organisation of the teaching of reading and new strategies to ensure that pupils read widely. As a result, last year more pupils reached the expected standards in phonics than previously. Reading attainment is also rising in key stages 1 and 2, including for disadvantaged pupils.

Staff are firmly behind you as you and your leadership team continue to make improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. All staff who expressed a view said that leaders use professional development effectively to encourage, challenge and support them to make improvements. Phase leaders work well to

support their colleagues and check that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good. The leader for the early years has a clear view of how to secure the best possible learning experiences for children based on her research and through partnership working with other settings. As a result, staff in the early years classes have a good understanding of how to support children to move forward with their learning.

Governors bring a wealth of expertise to the school and play a key part in ensuring that school priorities lead to a difference to the progress that pupils make. They challenge leaders about the progress that different groups in the school make, for example disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils.

The previous inspection report made a recommendation to ensure that pupils take more responsibility for their own learning. This has formed part of your improvement plans. Teachers create secure learning environments which encourage pupils to be resilient, to have a go, and to contribute during lessons. As a result, pupils are inquisitive and confidently respond to teachers' questions. Teachers are quick to notice when pupils have not fully understood their activities or when they are ready to move on to more difficult learning. This close match of learning activities to pupils' needs helps to maintain interest and supports pupils to make good progress.

There was also a recommendation to improve achievement in mathematics. Although achievement has continued to improve in key stage 1, this was not matched by the outcomes in mathematics in key stage 2 last year.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are effective. Pupils say that they feel safe, and they are safe. Staff responsible for recruitment are experienced and procedures are well organised. Leaders ensure that all staff have the information they need to keep pupils safe. Governors are aware of their responsibilities to check safeguarding arrangements and they do this with rigour.

Pupils report that staff deal with any bullying issues quickly and firmly. During breaktimes, pupils learn to take small risks using a wide variety of everyday materials provided to support their play. This helps them to learn to keep themselves safe beyond school. Improving pupils' attendance is a current priority as attendance has been below national averages for the past three years. You are ensuring that there is increased awareness of the impact that absence has on pupils. You are providing extra information to parents about attendance.

Inspection findings

- We explored how well you and your leadership team are improving mathematics, particularly in key stage 2. This is a current focus for improvement following some lower than expected outcomes last year.

- You and your leadership team have sought out good practice in the planning, teaching and assessment of mathematics in other schools. You have organised staff development in mathematics and used the expertise of specialist teachers to ensure that staff have good models to follow. Your leaders for mathematics check that new strategies to support the teaching of mathematics are consistently applied. For example, displayed in every classroom, there are examples of mathematical problems and how to solve them.
- Mathematics lessons include building pupils' confidence and fluency in number facts. Pupils also enjoy using these facts and having a go at special 'star' challenges. Staff have strong subject knowledge and use precise mathematical language in their discussions with pupils.
- This focus on mathematics has an impact on the progress that current pupils make. Assessment information provided by the school shows that, in all year groups, more pupils are on track to reach age-related expectations in mathematics than at the end of last year. Your assessments also show that disadvantaged pupils are achieving as well as their peers in mathematics.
- We also looked at how well disadvantaged children gain early reading skills in the Reception classes. In the past, there have been noticeable variations in progress for disadvantaged children in reading and writing. A new system to identify groups of children, focus on observing their learning, and to have extra conversations with their parents, is having a good impact. Staff say that they have a clearer picture of how best to support children, particularly in their reading and writing.
- Teaching assistants who know children well during the Reception year move up to Year 1 as the children do, to ensure that they settle quickly and make good progress right from the start. Staff report that this is making a positive difference to pupils' confidence in Year 1.
- Finally, we looked at how you create a culture of reading so that pupils want to, and do, read widely. Learning from other schools, you changed the organisation of reading lessons. Teachers use a whole-school reading plan which shows how and when specific reading skills are taught across the school.
- High-quality books support pupils' learning in a range of curriculum areas, such as history and geography. Teachers model good examples of language to develop pupils' vocabulary and support their reading across subjects. Learning spaces around the school promote a love of reading. For example, there is a display of the teachers' favourite books in the entrance and each classroom displays their 'author of the term'. As a result, there is a strong reading culture. Pupils are enthusiastic readers and see reading as an important part of their learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to check that pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics so that they are prepared well for their next stage in education
- attendance for pupils continues to improve.

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

Yours sincerely

Tonwen Empson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector met with senior leaders, and, together, they visited lessons across both school sites and looked at pupils' books. A discussion with pupils about their reading took place. The inspector talked with some pupils informally at lunchtime.

Several school documents were scrutinised, including the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness, the school development plan, minutes from governor meetings and information about the progress that pupils are currently making. Other documents relating to safeguarding, including the single central record, were also looked at.

There were meetings with subject and phase leaders. There was also a meeting with several members of the governing body and a telephone call with a representative from the local authority.

Parents' views were gathered at the start of the day and through the 89 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View. Staff views were considered from discussions with staff and from the 31 responses to an online survey. The 52 responses to an online survey from pupils were also taken into account.