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24 May 2017

Ruth Walker-Green
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Walker-Green

Short inspection of Staverton Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 May 2017, 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 April 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school is extremely well led and managed. Leaders and governors are aspirational for pupils and committed to the continued improvement of the school. You have a precise and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. You have used your detailed knowledge of pupils to create a sharply focused school improvement plan, which is designed to maximise pupils' progress. The plan is known and understood by all.

Parents hold the school and its staff in high esteem. All of the parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire would recommend the school to others. Parents commented on the welcoming, family atmosphere that you have created at the school. They also value how approachable and accessible they find senior leaders and teachers.

Pupils are happy, confident and proud of the school and appreciate the variety of trips and extra-curricular activities provided for them. You ensure that the school's values are reinforced through assemblies and lessons. You also provide regular opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures and religions. Pupils have a good understanding of diversity and inclusion and are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They told me that, 'everyone is kind to each other and we all get along.'

You made consolidating and developing pupils' mathematical skills a whole-school priority and ensured that this starts in the early years. You carefully researched best practices in other schools, before adapting a system that works for pupils at Staverton. You used an external mathematics consultant to provide training for staff in the new curriculum. Teachers now provide better support for pupils. They now plan mathematical tasks that challenge the most able pupils. For example, we saw together the most able children in the early years applying their knowledge of money to work out which coins were needed to buy fixed-priced items. The school's information indicates that current pupils are making faster progress and their attainment in mathematics is improving. You acknowledge that teachers are not giving pupils, particularly in key stage 1, enough opportunities to practise their problem-solving skills independently. This means that they are not deepening their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts well enough.

We also talked about how you have worked on ensuring that pupils' attainment in reading is consistently strong throughout the school. The pupils and parents I spoke with said that the school encourages regular reading. Pupils could all name their favourite book, which included modern and traditional texts, and enjoyed recommending books to their friends. When we looked at pupils' books together, we identified that pupils have not yet gained sufficient inference skills in reading. You noted that, while a start has been made on improving this, it is not yet happening regularly or consistently enough.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. A recent review of the school's procedures and practices has resulted in further improvements to the care and protection of pupils. All required checks on staff are carried out and recorded carefully. Leaders, governors and staff undertake regular and up-to-date training on child protection and safeguarding issues. All staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities to ensure children's safety and well-being. The files you showed me indicate that staff make prompt referrals when they have any concerns. Leaders are tenacious in seeking and pursuing external support when needed.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. You have provided opportunities for them to learn about issues such as e-safety. Visitors, such as the police, also remind pupils how to stay safe in the community. Pupils said that bullying is extremely rare but, if it does happen, they have complete confidence in staff to deal with it quickly and effectively.

Inspection findings

- You were appointed as headteacher in September 2013 and the school joined the Peterborough diocese education trust in August 2014. On your appointment, you took rapid action to raise standards at the school.

You focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning in all classes and brokered support from an external consultant.

- You ensure that training for staff is linked to whole-school priorities, such as developing pupils' mathematics and reading skills. As a result, all staff are clear about your high expectations, and staff are consistent in their application of school systems and policies. Staff are overwhelming positive about the school, as one member of staff said, 'Staverton is a fantastic environment for learning. I am proud to be part of such a lovely dedicated team.'
- The governing body provides leaders with effective support and challenge. Governors make sure that additional funding is used effectively to have a positive impact on pupils' well-being and progress.
- You have ensured that there is an effective assessment and tracking system in place, which provides you with a clear analysis of the attainment and progress of each individual pupil and of groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You regularly review pupils' progress to ensure that any pupil who is falling behind can receive timely support to catch up. Teachers have worked with other local schools and schools within the Peterborough diocese to ensure that their assessments are accurate. Teachers use assessment information about pupils to plan learning that takes most pupils on from what they already know and can do. Teachers now have a better understanding of what pupils need to do to achieve the expected standard and greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers and pupils have positive relationships, and pupils willingly follow teacher's instructions in lessons. Classrooms are attractive; displays celebrate pupils' work and provide them with helpful prompts and examples of how to make their work better.
- Pupils develop their key numeracy and literacy skills through the wider curriculum. They are encouraged to discuss and explain what they are learning to deepen their understanding. Most pupils now have a clearer understanding of the features of different types of writing and how to plan and organise their work, as well as use correct grammatical features. This is helping pupils to improve their writing. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 developed their vocabulary of plants and pollen and then successfully wrote explanations.
- Since the last inspection, children's attainment in the early years has been above average. The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has also been consistently above the national average. Pupils are confident and enthusiastic readers and well prepared for key stage 2.
- Pupils' attendance has been above the national average for the last three years. However, persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities took a slight dip in 2016. This was mainly due to medical reasons and pupils whose parents took holidays during term time. Leaders are taking all possible steps to maximise pupils' attendance, and attendance this year continues to be above the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers create regular opportunities for pupils to practise their problem-solving skills independently, particularly in key stage 1
- teachers continue to develop pupils' inference skills in reading, throughout the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Sally Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and shared my key lines of enquiry. I also met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with parents before school and met with a group of pupils in key stage 2 to talk about their school experience. You and I visited all classes and examined pupils' books, and talked with pupils to evaluate the quality of their learning. We also looked at a sample of pupils' books from different year groups. In addition, I scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the school's record of recruitment checks on staff. I evaluated the school's documentation in relation to pupils' attainment and progress and reviewed the school's own evaluation of its work and its improvement plans. I took account of the 31 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 19 responses from parents to the Ofsted free-text service. I also considered the eight responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. There were no responses from pupils to Ofsted's online survey to take into consideration.