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Miss Tracy Hoare
Headteacher
Wolborough Church of England (Aided) Nursery and Primary School
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Dear Miss Hoare

Short inspection of Wolborough Church of England (Aided) Nursery and Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 January 2019, 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 June 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You lead a dedicated staff team that is determined to provide an exciting curriculum for pupils. All of the parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire would recommend the school to others. Parents are particularly impressed by the support given to pupils and their families. One parent, typical of many, described how the school has, 'gone above and beyond for me and my family'.

Pupils told me how they enjoy taking on responsibilities offered to them by their teachers. They have numerous opportunities to share their views and concerns and this helps them to feel valued. All of the pupils who responded to the pupil survey said that they enjoy school.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to improve attendance and to make sure that teachers provide high levels of challenge for pupils in mathematics, particularly for the most able pupils. These formed two lines of enquiry for this inspection and are discussed later in this report. You were also asked to ensure that teachers insist on the highest standards of presentation of pupils' work and to address any inconsistencies in teaching.

During our visits to classes, we scrutinised pupils' workbooks to assess the progress being made over time. You agreed that there is clear evidence to show good overall progress being made across the school, particularly in English and mathematics. However, you also agreed that the standard of pupils' handwriting and presentation varied from class to class. There is room for improvement in this aspect.

We assessed the quality of work in pupils' topic books. This suggested that pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their writing skills when they write in subjects across the curriculum. You have identified this as an area for whole-school improvement and this features in your development plan for the current year.

The governing body is currently being restructured in response to a growing awareness that governors were not sufficiently holding school leaders to account for the quality of education across the school. The chair of governors has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors now provide a stronger balance of support and challenge. A good example of this is governors' awareness of the impact of new teaching strategies in mathematics and how these are raising standards.

Senior and subject leaders described how initiatives have been introduced recently to improve standards in English and mathematics. It is clear that leaders have made effective use of external support and high-quality training to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Many of these initiatives are new and it is too early to see the impact of these strategies. You are aware of the need to ensure that these leaders carry out ongoing assessments so that they can further develop successful initiatives and stop using ineffective ones.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and other leaders promote a strong culture for safeguarding pupils. Internal processes, including staff vetting and training, are effective. Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are suitably trained and effectively report concerns. Leaders work effectively with external agencies when necessary. They know the pupils and families who are considered to be vulnerable and are conscientious about following up concerns to achieve the right resolution.

Your Christian values are evident in the high level of respect and understanding that pupils show towards each other. Pupils told me that behaviour is positive and they understand the difference between bullying and pupils 'falling out'. They said that bullying is rare, but that staff deal with any issues effectively when they do occur.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They know how to stay safe in a variety of situations and different contexts. For example, they told me how they keep safe online and how they can protect themselves from cyber bullying. Pupils are also proud of the inclusive nature of the school. Parents commented on the school's positive support for pupils' emotional, mental and physical well-being.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed the particular aspects of the school's work on which the inspection would focus.
- The first line of enquiry considered how effectively leaders ensure that girls are making good progress in key stage 2. The previous inspection required leaders to ensure that all pupils are challenged to reach higher standards in mathematics. Pupils' progress in mathematics has improved at key stage 2 in recent years, from below the

national average in 2016 to above in 2018. In 2017 and 2018, a higher percentage of the most able Year 6 pupils achieved the higher standard than was seen nationally. However, information about pupils' progress shows that girls have made weaker progress than boys.

- Leaders have introduced different approaches to teaching and learning in mathematics and these have led to rising standards across the school. Teachers in all classes make sure that pupils are appropriately challenged. Scrutiny of pupils' workbooks at key stage 2 shows that girls and boys are making similarly strong progress. The school's current information on pupils' progress shows that girls are making stronger progress currently than in previous years, including the most able girls. Leaders of mathematics can show that new approaches to teaching the subject are having a noted impact. One of these approaches involves teachers 'pre-teaching' aspects of mathematics to specific pupils before introducing the concepts in class.
- The next line of enquiry assessed how leaders ensure that boys in key stage 2 are supported to make at least good progress in writing. Progress in writing at key stage 2 was weaker in 2018 than in previous years. Over time, writing outcomes have been lower for boys than for girls.
- Currently, writing standards are rising across key stage 2 for boys and girls. Teachers are encouraging pupils to write at greater depth in English and they are aware of the need to maintain a focus on improving boys' writing. During the inspection, I examined the quality of writing in English books and in subjects across the curriculum. You agreed that pupils would benefit from having more opportunities to use their writing skills when writing in subjects other than English. There are some good examples of this, with particularly strong examples from boys. However, teachers need to increase opportunities for writing in different styles and for different purposes across the curriculum.
- The third line of enquiry considered how well leaders check that additional funding is used effectively to help disadvantaged pupils, particularly in writing. The school has a proportion of disadvantaged pupils that is much higher than the national average. During the last two years, more than half of Year 6 pupils have been disadvantaged. Over time, disadvantaged pupils have made similar, and in some cases stronger progress than other pupils from similar starting points. In 2018, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in writing was weaker than their progress in reading.
- You can show that leaders continually assess the impact of the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. They are able to give an accurate assessment of the impact of specific spending. For example, a significant proportion of the additional funding is used to employ a family support worker. Leaders can show how this appointment has led to excellent support being given to families who struggle to get their children to attend regularly. In a number of cases, highly effective support has led to rapidly improving attendance. Governors know that disadvantaged pupils are making good progress. However, they accept that they need to keep a closer check on how you use the additional funding.
- The final line of enquiry assessed how effectively leaders have acted to address the high rates of persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Improving attendance was an area for improvement following the previous inspection and this remains a priority for the

school. Leaders are aware of this issue and have taken steps to identify the barriers that hinder regular attendance for specific pupils. Leaders work closely with external agencies to support families and the team that oversees this issue has a deep understanding of each situation. Their effective actions have led to significant improvements for individual pupils, as shown in case studies. Persistent absence rates are falling but are still above national averages for certain groups of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- senior and middle leaders check that initiatives introduced recently are effectively raising standards in English and mathematics
- staff give pupils at key stages 1 and 2 more experience of using their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Hodson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, various school leaders and the chair of the governing body. I had a telephone conversation with the local authority adviser for schools. We visited classrooms together so that I could assess the progress being made by pupils. I looked at pupils' workbooks and talked with pupils in classes and at a separate meeting. I considered the progress being made by current pupils.

I looked at a range of documentary evidence, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and plans for improvement. I looked at various documents related to safeguarding, including the single central record and referrals to the local authority. I also assessed current rates of attendance for groups of pupils. I gathered views from parents at the school gate and took account of 17 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. I reviewed several free-text responses from parents and findings from the questionnaires for staff and pupils.