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Mr Matthew Harper
Acting Headteacher
Bridge and Patrixbourne Church of England Primary School
Conyngham Lane
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Dear Mr Harper

Short inspection of Bridge and Patrixbourne Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 March 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 June 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since you became acting headteacher in January 2018, you have led the school with passion and determination. You and your leaders have sustained a very positive and warm atmosphere in which pupils thrive. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One parent said, 'The school really does inspire a passion for learning, which is very special.'

The school has a broad, balanced curriculum, placing its values at the centre of everything it does. Music, art and sports are strengths of the school. During the inspection, parents were invited to spend the afternoon listening to each class perform, then to view pupils' artwork. Parents commented that this is only one example of the varied and exciting learning experiences enjoyed by pupils. A parent, on the Ofsted online survey, commented, 'The school has an excellent ethos; the child's personal and spiritual development is given high priority as well as rigorous academic standards.' During the inspection, pupils' behaviour in lessons was impeccable and they were eager to learn. Relationships are positive, facilitating a caring and highly ambitious learning culture throughout the school.

Governors work collectively to check thoroughly all aspects of the school. They know the school well and have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. They provide rigorous levels of challenge and work closely with leaders and staff to ensure that the school improves further.

The previous inspection recognised the school's many strengths, for example how the promotion of pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the school's success. The inspection also noted outstanding behaviour and safety. However, at the previous inspection, a small minority of parents and carers felt that they were insufficiently informed and involved in their children's progress. The school has worked tirelessly to improve this aspect of its work. As a result, communication and parent engagement are now strong. One parent, echoing the views of many, stated that, 'The staff are very approachable and go the extra mile to build relationships with children, parents and families.'

Additionally, at the previous inspection, the school was asked to share the good practice already identified in some year groups across the whole school. Another area for improvement was focused on leaders and teachers ensuring that all pupils, especially the less able, are supported to do as well as they can in mathematics. You have made changes that have led to improvements in both these areas. You have successfully introduced new approaches that have supported low-attaining pupils in mathematics. Teachers and teaching assistants have undergone successful training, and parents have been given effective support to help their children in mathematics at home. However, you recognise that some most-able pupils do not yet make the same strong progress in mathematics as they do in reading and writing. You have carefully considered plans in place to rectify this.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a very strong culture of safeguarding in the school. You, the designated leader and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are robust. The single central record is fully compliant, and the school's recruitment procedures are secure. New staff receive a comprehensive induction and, therefore, fully understand the school policies and statutory guidance on keeping pupils safe. Record-keeping is thorough, and any concerns are dealt with diligently. All parents who completed the Ofsted online survey believe that the school keeps pupils safe.

Inspection findings

- In 2017, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected and higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of both key stages 1 and 2 were well above the national averages. Nevertheless, progress for most-able pupils in mathematics is rightly seen as a current priority by governors, leaders and staff. You have recently promoted staff to lead improvements outlined in the whole-school mathematics action plan. Priorities are wisely focused on making sure that most-able pupils are given work that is challenging and stimulating. It was evident from assessment information, observations and scrutiny of pupils' work that new approaches in mathematics are enabling some most-able pupils to make better progress. However, in a number of classes, a minority of most-able pupils are not yet being sufficiently stretched.
- Leaders have worked effectively with teachers and assistants so they now fruitfully share good practice relating to many aspects of teaching. For example,

leaders have trained the support staff so they can confidently work with teachers to create resources.

- Leaders and governors rigorously monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders approach each pupil as an individual. They produce a useful profile, recording the pupil's levels, targets and interventions and make sure that the right support is in place. The school's monitoring and tracking system enables leaders to identify quickly any pupil who is at risk of falling behind. Plans to assist them in meeting their targets are swiftly implemented. However, this approach to supporting disadvantaged pupils is in its infancy and you acknowledge that it is not yet fully embedded.
- In 2017, attendance figures, although above the national average, were below those from the recent past. The school has taken decisive action, which includes supporting families. This has resulted in a reduction in persistent absence.
- You and your leaders have wisely used a variety of methods to improve communication with parents, for example letters, personal conversations, emails or, more recently, social media. Parents commented that you and other senior leaders are always available in the morning to greet parents and pupils. Parents are effectively included in their child's education by working in close partnership with the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- most-able pupils are consistently provided with sufficient challenge in mathematics
- leaders ensure that new approaches to providing academic support for disadvantaged pupils are fully bedded in and having the intended impact.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Conway
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and the school's leadership team, your local authority school improvement adviser and members of the governing body, including the chair. Together, we visited a range of classes covering all year groups, observing pupils' learning and talking with them about their progress, and we scrutinised a sample of pupils' work in mathematics. I looked at all the responses to

Ofsted's online questionnaires, including the views of 85 parents. I looked at a range of documentation, including information about the work of governors, safeguarding and assessment. We examined the school's analysis of pupils' progress and attainment, and leaders' self-evaluation and plans for improvement.