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Mrs Ann Alton
Headteacher
St Werburgh's Church of England VA Primary School
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Dear Mrs Alton

Short inspection of St Werburgh's Church of England VA Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 January 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 2013.

There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The spirit of St Werburgh's is captured in the school's motto 'Achieve, Believe, Together'. All of the school's work is sprinkled with references to its Christian values and beliefs. This successfully supports pupils to become responsible citizens through understanding that the values and beliefs associated with their school are shared within British culture. Pupils and staff alike were pleased to show me what they were doing, reflecting a clear and shared sense of pride in this strong and cohesive school community. You are successfully creating a culture in which all staff are working together with a shared vision to provide the very best for every pupil. As a result, pupils are ambitious, enthusiastic and confident learners.

Our visits to several classes provided good examples of this. In a Year 5–6 class, pupils were engaging in high-quality discussion about the role of Martin Luther King in promoting racial equality. They watched excerpts from his famous 'I have a dream' speech and identified the key features which reflected his views and beliefs. In the Reception class, children were captivated by the many clues they had found suggesting that an alien spaceship had landed in the playground. They made a list of all the clues and discussed these together with great excitement.

You, and other senior leaders, consistently communicate a clear vision. You are committed to continued improvement in order to build on the school's success. For example, you immediately identified what needed to be done to make sure that the school addressed a fall in standards in mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2016. This had a positive effect on pupils' achievement at the end of Year 6 in 2017. You are ambitious for the school and know the school well. You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement from the last inspection. You were able to explain clearly to me the many strengths of the school, as well as the areas that still need to be developed. You and other senior leaders have evaluated the school accurately and have the capacity to make improvements successfully.

Pupils are proud ambassadors for their school. Their thoughtfulness, care and respect for one another are impressive, particularly when adults are not directly supervising them. In the playground at break- and lunchtimes, pupils' behaviour is calm and considerate. In lessons, pupils sustain good concentration and try hard with their work. Their notable conduct reflects the school's strong Christian ethos and effective strategies to promote high standards of behaviour.

All parents whom I spoke with said that their child is happy at school and they would recommend the school to other parents. They are extremely positive about the support that their children receive and the progress they are making. They hold you in high regard and praised the approachability and dedication of staff. Inspection evidence supports these positive views of the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

A strong culture of safeguarding is at the heart of the school's work. The single central record indicates that all required checks are made to ensure that staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children. You ensure that staff receive the required training, including training relating to protecting pupils from extremism and radicalisation. Your persistent yet thoughtful and considered work with outside agencies ensures that pupils and their families receive exactly the right support they need. All staff are highly vigilant. They are aware of the actions they need to take if they think that a child protection issue has arisen.

Pupils whom I spoke with said that they feel safe in all parts of the school. Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and around the school. They are respectful towards adults and cooperate with each other well. Pupils are alert to the dangers of using the internet and social media. Parents express high levels of confidence in the school. They told me that you do everything possible to ensure that their children are safe, happy and well.

Pupils' attendance is above the national average. You take swift action to follow up any concerns and work effectively with external agencies and families to bring about rapid improvements.

Inspection findings

- You are providing excellent leadership through establishing an ethos of high expectations. Your vision is clearly understood by staff, pupils, parents and governors. As a result, pupils make good progress, behave well and thoroughly enjoy learning together.
- Governors are providing a strong strategic direction for the school. They know the school well and take their roles and responsibilities seriously. They are uncompromising in their determination to ensure that the school provides a good education. As a result, pupils achieve well academically and personally.
- Pupils excel in writing. Writing is embedded throughout the curriculum, and pupils display high levels of confidence in writing for a variety of purposes. Pupils' work shows that they are provided with a good range of stimuli for writing. They use their technical skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation correctly and know how to apply the features of good writing across different genres. Pupils' handwriting and presentation are neat and of a high standard.
- Teaching is successful in helping pupils to develop a love of reading. Reading has a high profile around the school. Pupils enjoy many opportunities to become familiar with different types of texts. Pupils are enthusiastic about learning phonics. They use their phonic knowledge well to read new words. However, you and your leaders recognise that there is still more work to be done to ensure that progress in reading matches the well-above-average progress in writing by the end of key stage 2. You have rightly identified the need to improve pupils' skills of inference and deduction at key stage 2.
- There is a strong emphasis on providing a rich, active and creative curriculum, which is finely balanced with striving for academic excellence. For example, pupils are enthusiastic about participating in a wide range of sports, and the school enjoys many successes in county league tournaments. However, you have rightly identified that some subjects are not as well developed as you would like them to be. This is a priority for improvement this year. Your actions to develop subject leaders will help to drive this improvement. We agreed that, as the curriculum develops, more could be done to challenge pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Pupils' cultural development is enhanced through the school's link with Sukantanager School in India. Your visit in 2017 had a significant impact on pupils. For example, pupils told me that they understand that food, water and essential clothing are not always available for the children living in the slums of Calcutta. Pupils are excited about your return visit in a few weeks' time. They are keen to find out how the funds they have raised have been used to improve life for pupils in Sukantanager School. This link is successfully broadening pupils' horizons and preparing them well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils enjoy meaningful opportunities to contribute to the life of the school. Pupils who are elected to the council take their responsibilities seriously. They have recently begun producing 'St Werburgh's Voice'. Pupils told me that this

newspaper keeps them 'in the know' with exclusive pupil news and views. Pupils also take on roles such as playground peacemakers. These opportunities contribute strongly to their mature attitudes, high levels of confidence and sense of responsibility.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' rates of progress in reading match those in writing by the end of key stage 2
- the level of challenge for all pupils is securely embedded across the curriculum
- subject leaders' skills are fully developed so that they can drive improvements in their areas of responsibility.

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

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Bathgate
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, your senior and middle leaders, four representatives of the governing body and two groups of pupils. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I visited a number of classes to see pupils and staff at work. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school, at breaktimes and during lessons. I met a number of parents informally at the beginning of the school day. I considered the views of 79 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as the 52 responses that parents made using the free text service. I also considered the 106 responses to the pupils' survey and the 23 responses to the staff survey. I evaluated a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies.