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Jenny Griffiths
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Dear Mrs Griffiths

Short inspection of Church Aston Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 4 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Leadership and teaching continue to be effective. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 is above average. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance rates are high. Recommendations made at the previous inspection have been addressed.

Since joining the school as headteacher in September 2018 you have been quick to identify the school's existing strengths. In addition, you have identified appropriate priorities for further improvement. This inspection found that you and the governing body have an informed and realistic view of the school's current performance.

I also found that, while academic standards are typically above average, pupils' attainment in reading is usually higher than in mathematics. For the most part, this is because the teaching of reading is stronger than the teaching of mathematics across the school. Indeed, there is a rich culture of reading in this school, which is supported by a well-organised and imaginative curriculum.

The staff work well together and there is a climate of mutual respect across the entire school community. Parents are very supportive of the school's work and report that their children are thriving at the school. I, too, found that pupils enjoy their lessons and feel happy and successful at the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is effective. The school's procedures and routines are fit for purpose. Staff training is up to date and all members of the school team receive regular guidance and know what to do if they have a concern.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and can explain what they would do if something was worrying them. They know they can trust the adults in school to help them and, in turn, staff are attentive to pupils' well-being. Pupils learn respect for others and bullying of any sort is not accepted.

Any accidents, illnesses or upsets are attended to quickly. Risk assessments for school activities are carried out when necessary and access into the school building is controlled.

Efficient routines for checking on visitors and the adults who work in school are in place and records are kept correctly.

Inspection findings

- The very small numbers in each year group make it hard to describe a typical intake. Indeed, children's pre-school experiences and level of knowledge vary, sometimes quite significantly, from one child to another. However, the school makes early assessments and this work, coupled with good communication with pre-school providers and parents, means that staff form an accurate view of children's starting points. Consequently, teaching is planned well to meet different learning needs and builds successfully on children's interests, experiences and fascinations. Work in children's books shows that they are provided with a wide range of interesting activities and experiences that help them to make progress towards the early learning goals. Both boys and girls do well in the early years, and the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception year is regularly above national figures. Because Reception children are taught in the same class as younger key stage 1 pupils, transition from early years into Year 1 is seamless. Once in key stage 1, this strong progress continues.
- Throughout the school, the teaching of reading is an evident strength. There are daily phonics sessions when pupils are taught in small groups. Work and activities are matched carefully to pupils' abilities and build securely on their previous learning. Given the high quality of phonics teaching, it is no surprise that the proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected standard for their age in the phonics screening check has been above national figures year after year.
- This effective attention to early reading is indicative of the very positive reading culture in the school. Pupils read regularly in class and are expected to do the same at home. Teachers introduce pupils to new and exciting books and encourage them to enjoy stories and 'finding out'. Daily teaching also helps pupils to learn about grammar, spelling and punctuation in a structured and logical way. Standards at the end of Year 2 are usually very high and pupils move up to their

next school with well-developed reading skills.

- The quality of teaching in mathematics is also effective but is not as strong as it is in reading. This is because expectations for pupils' learning in mathematics are not as high. For example, during this inspection, some Year 1 pupils coped successfully with challenging mathematical work. They were able to apply what they knew with focused enthusiasm and worked hard because informed teaching expected the very best from them. In addition, teachers anticipated possible misunderstandings in advance so they were ready to step in quickly when pupils were unsure or asked questions. In another instance, however, teaching did not engage pupils quite so effectively. Resources and explanations were not tailored well enough to pupils' needs and a few pupils drifted off task. Consequently, some pupils got more out of the lesson than others. My checks on work in pupils' mathematics books and my conversations with you revealed that teachers' expectations and progression in mathematics teaching are aspects of the school's work that could be strengthened.
- During this inspection, I also considered the breadth of the school's curriculum. I found that this small school does a lot and responds positively to pupils' own ideas. For example, following a recent visit to the school by the local mayor, children came up with their own ideas for a writing competition linked to the visit. Furthermore, staff organise visits to museums and theatres and arrange regular activities in a local deer park. These extra events stimulate pupils' imaginations and act as a springboard for learning in different subjects. You have plans to enrich the curriculum further by introducing more opportunities for learning outdoors.
- Woven throughout this worthwhile curriculum are several constructive strategies that promote good behaviour and an understanding of the diversity of modern Britain. As noted earlier, pupils' pre-school experiences are very varied. Some arrive at school ready to settle and learn, while others take time to adjust to the school's expectations. However, the staff team works hard to help pupils develop a positive approach to learning and one another. For instance, you have recently reviewed the school's behaviour policy, and pupils have been involved in drawing up the rules. Regular rewards and celebration assemblies acknowledge and encourage good behaviour and reinforce the school's expectations. In most cases, pupils respond very well to this.
- Since the previous inspection, assessment across the school has strengthened and parents receive reliable information about how well their children are doing. My conversations with parents and responses on Parent View indicate that parents hold very positive views about the school. In particular, parents value the school's nurturing ethos and the openness of staff. They say that staff changes have been managed well and that they are kept well-informed about school life. They are satisfied that their children are well cared for and kept safe at school. Inspection evidence supports these views.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- Further strengthen the quality of teaching in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high across the whole school
 - making sure resources, teaching and strategies for managing pupils' behaviour are used to best effect to keep all pupils motivated and engaged in learning
 - helping teachers to learn from the strongest practice in this and other schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Diane Pye
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and members of the staff team. I also met with three governors and an educational consultant. I carried out short observations of teaching and looked at pupils' work in books and on display. I talked with pupils in lessons and at lunchtime. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.

By the end of the inspection, there were 26 recent responses on Parent View and 10 free-text responses. I took account of these and also considered the three responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

I looked at a number of documents, including the school's own evaluation of its performance, improvement plans, information about the work of governors, leaders' written reports to governors, external reports about the school, and several school policy documents. I also checked the school's website and the procedures for keeping pupils safe. I asked the staff, pupils and parents about safeguarding matters.