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Dear Mrs Kenny

Short inspection of All Saints CofE (C) First School

Following my visit to the school on 14 September 2016, 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 December 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have created a safe and nurturing environment in which pupils thrive and feel safe. You have done this through highly effective teamwork and by listening to and responding fully to pupils' and parents' views. Within your small school environment, you and your staff have a detailed knowledge and understanding of pupils' backgrounds, abilities and needs. Collectively you use this information to monitor pupils' achievement and well-being in order to ensure that pupils are happy and achieve well.

Since the last inspection you have successfully addressed two of the three key issues raised by the inspection. Teachers make regular checks on pupils during lessons and spend quality time working with focus groups of pupils to ensure that they understand any new skills being taught. Even though the most able make good progress and attain above average standards at the end of Year 2, you are not complacent and acknowledge that still more could be done to ensure that the most able pupils are challenged as well as they could be in all classes in reading, writing and mathematics. Additionally, you acknowledge that at times teachers do not fully engage some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure that they succeed as well as they could. Nevertheless, as a result of your effective leadership and precise evaluations of teaching, pupils have continued to make good progress from their starting points and leave Year 4 well prepared for middle school.

You have carefully managed the changes in staffing which have occurred in the last two years and successfully tackled weaknesses in teaching. The focus on maintaining the stability of teaching was conducted without sacrificing the progress pupils make. Curriculum changes have been managed well, but not all pupils have a secure grasp of grammar, punctuation and spelling skills and this has a detrimental effect on writing standards in some year groups. You have worked closely with other schools in the area to implement a new assessment system in line with national changes. Review of the process so far identified that the information provided for governors and staff needs to be clearer regarding the progress made by pupils between each key stage and by key groups. Adjustments already planned include refining the criteria used to determine if pupils are attaining above, at or below age-related standards, and tracking pupils between Year 2 and Year 4 to gauge progress across key stage 2.

Safeguarding is effective.

As the designated safeguarding leader, you make sure that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff receive appropriate training and are clear about their roles in protecting children. Governors and staff have received the latest guidance of 'Keeping children safe in education'. You and your governors carry out safer recruitment checks on staff and other adults to make sure that they are suitably qualified and fit to work with children. You make swift and appropriate referrals to outside agencies where you or your staff have any concerns about a pupil's well-being. This ensures that additional support is provided if needed, or investigations carried out.

Generic risk assessments are also compiled for different school activities, together with personalised and individual risk assessments for pupils with physical difficulties or medical needs. You place a high importance on ensuring that pupils feel safe and are taught to stay safe. This is covered in different activities, such as visits by the school nurse or members of the emergency services, and through personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils spoke to me confidently about fire drill routines, stranger danger, water safety and the dangers associated with using the internet. You care deeply about the pupils at All Saints and ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and effective.

Inspection findings

- You and your governing body have continued to be dedicated leaders who are ambitious for pupils to achieve as well as they can. Since the last inspection, outcomes in the early years and key stage 1 rose between 2012 and 2015 and were consistently above the national average. Provisional assessment information for 2016 shows that the proportion of children reaching a good level of development in the early years remained above the national average. Additionally, the majority of pupils in Year 2 reached at least the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Across all year groups, most pupils build well on their different starting points and make good progress in English, mathematics and other subjects.

- Your self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate. You use assessment information and checks on teaching to determine where further improvements are needed. For example, you detected a declining trend in the Year 1 phonics standards and alongside your literacy coordinator took prompt action to halt this decline. This included training for staff, new reading resources, workshops for parents and extra support for pupils struggling with their reading. Consequently, the decline in results has been successfully arrested. In 2016, 90% of pupils reached the level required in the Year 1 phonics check and almost a third of pupils in Year 2 exceeded the standard required in reading.
- Governors provide good levels of challenge and support to leaders. They have an accurate overview of the quality of teaching and how well the school is achieving compared to other schools nationally. This is because they pose pertinent questions during meetings and are involved in monitoring activities, such as looking at pupils' books and collecting pupils' views. While the school development plan is centred on the right priorities, governors agree that interim, measurable milestones are needed to enable them to check whether the school is on track to achieve the objectives set.
- Following changes to the curriculum, you have introduced a new assessment system in conjunction with other schools in your area. Teachers assess pupils at different points during the year. The local authority carried out checks on early years and key stage 1 assessments in 2016 and agreed that these were accurate. However, after an initial trial year, the assessment information presented to governors does not yet provide a clear picture of pupils' progress over time. This makes it difficult to identify progress, for example between Year 2 and Year 4, or provide a summary of the progress made by key groups, such as boys, girls and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Teachers plan and cater well for the mixed ages of pupils within their classes. Although different tasks are often presented for different age groups, there are occasions when some teachers do not challenge or cater for the needs of the most able pupils well enough. For example, reading books are sometimes too easy for confident and fluent readers, writing tasks do not extend pupils' language skills, and too few pupils are given tasks which promote their reasoning skills in mathematics. Although the most able pupils make good progress, there is scope for a higher proportion of the most able pupils to exceed the standards expected in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in key stage 2. Teachers have high expectations and they are usually very successful in engaging pupils. However, on occasion, some writing tasks provided for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not stimulate or motivate them. Without adult support, pupils sometimes disengage and do not make the progress they should.
- Teachers promote writing across the curriculum well. They make good links with other subjects which encourage pupils to write in different styles, for example writing a letter based on their class text of 'James and the giant peach' or labelling pictures about harvest. Pupils regularly practise their handwriting and are rewarded with 'pen licences' in key stage 2 when they have a neat and cursive handwriting style. However, pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling skills have not yet been addressed because leaders have been focusing on

improving phonics. Your literacy leader has rightly identified this aspect as needing further development and is planning to provide training for staff.

- Teachers use support staff effectively to lead groups or work with individual pupils. This includes help for the very small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school funded by the pupil premium grant. As a result, these pupils make good progress. Teachers have good subject knowledge and ask challenging questions to check on pupils' understanding during lessons and extend their learning and thinking. The early years teacher, for example, keeps a watchful eye that groups working outdoors sustain their learning as effectively as those indoors.
- The attendance for the overall majority of pupils is high. However, a small number of disadvantaged pupils who were absent in 2016 had a detrimental impact on the attendance figures in 2016. Nevertheless, attendance remained in line with the national average. More importantly, you took appropriate action to track and monitor the attendance of those pupils who did not attend school regularly. You involved the education welfare officer and support was put in place. Information was also shared with the middle school as part of your transition procedures to ensure that the attendance of those pupils causing concern leaving at the end of Year 4 would be monitored at their next school.
- Pupils are happy and enjoy school. Children joining the school in nursery and reception class settle well and quickly become familiar with the routines set. Pupils play well together at playtimes and older pupils relish taking on the responsibility for looking after and playing with the younger children. Behaviour is at least good in lessons and around school. Pupils are polite and respectful to adults and each other. They describe their school as 'fun' and 'like one big, happy family'. Parents are equally positive about the school. Typical comments made include 'My son goes into school every day with a smile on his face and thoroughly enjoys being there' and 'My child is coming on in leaps and bounds.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers consistently plan work which engages and motivates pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and challenges the most able pupils
- teachers develop pupils' grammar, spelling and punctuation skills in order to embed changes planned or made in order to further raise achievement in reading and writing
- leaders refine the school's assessment system so that it provides a clearer overall picture of progress made across a key stage and by key groups of pupils
- interim, measurable milestones are used in the school development plan to enable leaders to check on the success of their actions during the course of the year.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Lichfield, the regional schools commissioner and the director of

children's services for Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Simpson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one day inspection, I met with you and members of your leadership team and governing body. I discussed the work of the school with you and together we carried out some short visits to all classrooms. During these visits I looked at pupils' work and spoke to them about their learning. I also spoke informally to pupils about behaviour and how they learn how to keep themselves safe. I observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime as well as in lessons. I heard a sample of pupils read from Year 1 and Year 4.

Additional information was provided through discussions with school governors and a telephone conversation with the local authority representative. I looked at a range of school documents, including the checks on the suitability of staff to work with children, the minutes of governors' meetings and the school's information about pupils' progress, attainment and attendance. I also reviewed the school's own evaluation of its work, together with the school development plan. I took account of the 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, together with 12 letters and emails sent in by parents and views expressed by parents as they brought their children to school. There were no responses to the pupil or staff questionnaire.