

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



9 March 2017

Mrs Frances Burns
Headteacher
Knights Templar Church of England/Methodist Community School
Liddymore Road
Watchet
Somerset
TA23 0EX

Dear Mrs Burns

Short inspection of Knights Templar Church of England/Methodist Community School

Following my visit to the school on 21 February 2017, 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. At the heart of the school is a determination to see the pupils succeed in being resilient, confident and well prepared for the next stage in their learning. You and other leaders achieve this successfully because you know the pupils' various starting points and use this information to ensure that staff build swiftly on each pupil's individual needs. Since taking over the running of the on-site early years unit in 2014, the governors and other leaders have taken this as an opportunity to give children an even better start. Consequently, this has led to improved early personal, social, emotional and language development which serves the children well as they move into the Reception Year and beyond.

You and the leadership team are strongly focused on continual improvement. A particular strength is the use of ongoing professional development and other training opportunities to enable staff in being reflective. As a result, this has strengthened teaching, learning and assessment, which, in turn, is securing improvements in pupils' outcomes across the school. Furthermore, pupils are keen and eager to learn because of the breadth and full range of opportunities provided. You have established a settled team of teachers and staff who share the same principles and vision as the leaders.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have successfully raised standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1. Although the pupils have not yet

met national expectations in the Year 1 phonics check, there is a strong pattern of sustained improvement towards the national average. Also, since the previous inspection, outcomes for children by the time they leave the Reception Year have improved markedly, although still not yet at national average, particularly in writing. You and the leadership team are not complacent. You have rightly identified these as aspects for improvement as well as the need to ensure better outcomes for the most able pupils, which was also a priority from the previous inspection. In 2016, no pupils attained the new 'higher standard' in reading, writing or mathematics at the end of key stage 1. As a result, we agreed that this short inspection would focus on these aspects.

Since the previous inspection, there have been changes to the organisation and structure of the governing body. Structural changes have led to an increased capacity for governor visits, which have been helpful to drive school improvement. You have worked effectively with governors to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are at the heart of governors' activities, including meetings and visits. Governors have taken effective action in securing a new appointment to the substantive post of headteacher from September 2017. Furthermore, you are working with governors to fill vacancies on the governing body in order to maintain the current input and challenge of governors.

You work effectively with parents to build positive relationships. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and appreciate the work of staff in caring for the children and delivering high-quality teaching and learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, other leaders and staff take effective action to keep pupils safe because you are keen to promote a strong culture of safeguarding. Pupils feel safe and show a strong understanding of how to stay safe, for example when they are using the internet. This is because you have successfully introduced ways to teach the pupils and raise awareness of modern issues which may affect them. In particular, events such as 'Internet safety day' are effective in reminding pupils of potential risk. Furthermore, as leaders and governors, you show a determination and resilience to keep pupils safe, in particular on those occasions when you have been instrumental in initiating and escalating concerns quickly, or arranging additional meetings with external colleagues for pupils with child protection or 'child in need' plans.

Staff and governors receive appropriate training in safeguarding. Pupils are aware of the designated leads for safeguarding and have confidence in the adults in the school. As a result of effective training, staff respond positively to pupils and know what to do when they need to listen to pupils and how to record and pass on any concerns. You and the other designated safeguarding leader check referrals and take prompt action as needed. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Inspection findings

- Following disappointing outcomes for the most able pupils in last year's key stage 1 national tests, you have worked quickly to identify issues and have taken effective action to improve teaching and provision for the most able pupils. You have achieved this principally through delivering high-quality training for teachers so that they are fully aware of the standards expected of higher-attaining pupils. Additional moderation with other primary schools has been effective in improving teachers' knowledge so that they are matching work closely to the pupils' needs.
- You have improved the school's use of assessment information, particularly in Years 3 and 4. As a result, you are now using mostly accurate information to check the progress of pupils. However, some teachers' assessments are still prone to being too conservative, which can give leaders a false impression of how well the pupils are actually doing. This is especially true in Year 4, where pupils are now reaching high standards in reading, writing and mathematics and are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- The improvements seen over time in the Year 1 phonics screening check have been secured as a consequence of improving teaching. You have introduced effective training for staff, so that teachers and teaching assistants are confident in teaching phonics, and have introduced an effective means of delivering daily sessions. Pupils are taught according to their needs (and not just chronological age). Overall, this is supporting pupils to learn well and most are on track to meet the standards expected in the screening check. However, as yet pupils have not met the national average and, in some workbooks, pupils are not applying their phonics knowledge to spell consistently when writing on their own.
- Together with other leaders, you have worked effectively to improve pupils' language development which you made a priority. There is tangible impact on the pupils' speaking and communication skills. Consequently, they are in a strong position to learn as they move between Nursery, the Reception Year and into key stage 1. Recent improvements in phonics, reading and writing in key stage 1 are linked to the school taking over the early years unit.
- You have led improvements well in the early years foundation stage, such that there has been consistent improvement in the children's outcomes, especially in the children's reading and their mathematical development. Writing too is improving overall, but outcomes for disadvantaged boys still 'lag' behind their other non-disadvantaged counterparts. This is something that you recognise and this group are now making strong progress to catch up, typically from mark-making at the start of the academic year to currently writing some plausible letters and words for meaning. However, the children's development in writing, linked to their knowledge of letters and sounds, remains a high priority so that these children are well prepared for key stage 1.
- Pupils' attendance is starting to improve as a result of the actions you are taking. Along with other leaders, you do not tolerate poor attendance as you rightly

recognise its importance both to pupils' learning and their welfare. However, attendance for key groups or individuals, including disadvantaged pupils, is still lower than it should be and therefore must remain a priority for school leaders.

- You have been effective in establishing an effective team of teachers and teaching assistants who work well together in preparing, delivering and evaluating the impact of their work. As a result, pupils enjoy high-quality support and direction which is enabling them to make strong and sometimes rapid progress. Adults use a range of questions skilfully to deepen pupils' understanding or to address misconceptions. However, minor inconsistencies exist, for example in modelling or checking pupils' understanding of word meaning in phonics, which leads to some variability in the quality of teaching.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a greater proportion of pupils meet the national expectations in the Year 1 phonics screening check and can also apply their phonics knowledge more consistently when writing on their own
- disadvantaged boys leaving the Reception Year are better prepared for key stage 1, especially in writing
- attendance continues to improve, in particular for disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Stewart Gale
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you to agree the timetable and inspection activities for the day. I also met with the teachers in the early years foundation stage to evaluate the progress of children in their writing. In addition, I met briefly with a teacher and teaching assistant to verify factual information about their recruitment and appointment to their posts. I scrutinised safeguarding records and discussed a wide range of matters related to safeguarding and pupils' safety and welfare, including staff recruitment and vetting procedures. Together, we visited phonics lessons in Year 1 and also undertook a learning walk to evaluate the effectiveness of provision for the most able pupils. This involved scrutinising a wide range of books and talking at length with different pupils. I also met with representatives of the governing body and reviewed school documents, including the 'School Development and Evaluation

Plan', and read samples of governors' visits. I also heard pupils read in Year 4 and sought a range of views about safeguarding arrangements across the spectrum of inspection activities. I considered the responses made by parents to Parent View, including 55 responses online and a further 21 received via hard copies sent into the school. I also took account of three additional communications via text.

The key lines of enquiry tested on the short inspection day included:

- the challenge and improvement for the most able pupils in reading, writing and mathematics across the school
- the effectiveness of teaching in phonics to raise standards, especially in Year 1
- outcomes at the end of the early years in writing, especially for disadvantaged boys
- the effectiveness of leaders to improve pupils' attendance
- the effectiveness of safeguarding.