

15 March 2019

Mrs Sophie Thomas
Headteacher
St Andrew's CofE (Aided) Primary School
Belfast Street
Hove
East Sussex
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Dear Mrs Thomas

Short inspection of St Andrew's CofE (Aided) Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 March 2019, 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 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. In the past few years, the school has grown in size by adding one additional class to most year groups. Leaders and governors have risen proudly to the challenge of leading a large and inclusive primary school. You joined the school in January 2019 bringing renewed energy and direction to improve the school still further. You quickly recognised the school's many strengths and have galvanised the staff team to tackle with rigour and urgency those areas that still require some development.

Pupils are positive about their learning and they enjoy cooperative relationships with their teachers and friends. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's nurturing ethos. They say that teachers encourage their children well. Parents praise the wide range of opportunities that help their children to flourish, such as in sport and music.

At the time the school was last inspected, inspectors asked leaders to improve the quality of teaching and learning, develop subject leaders and sharpen school improvement planning. You have maintained a keen focus on the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. You acknowledge a continuing need to develop a consistently high quality of teaching and learning and you have developed clear plans that are in the process of being implemented.

Children in the Reception classes typically make good progress. Well-resourced classroom environments help pupils to develop skills across the different areas of

learning and to discover things for themselves. Parents say that their children make impressive gains in their learning. Typical of many parents with children in Reception was one who said: 'Children are given lots of opportunity to develop their independence. Teachers know the children well, identify their strengths and give them support when it is needed.'

You have made it a priority to reverse a recent decline in pupils' outcomes at the end of both key stages 1 and 2. As a first step, the new leadership team has started to improve the curriculum for both English and mathematics. Supported by the staff team, you are driving a collective ambition to ensure that all pupils achieve their very best.

Teachers and teaching assistants appreciate the high priority you have given to their training. Your plans include providing all teachers and support staff with the subject-specific training that they need to remove any gaps remaining in their curriculum knowledge. You, together with your leaders and governors, wisely recognise that recent improvements to the school's provision need to be deepened. Your improvement plans include timely checks on the progress of leaders' actions and their impact on pupils' learning and achievement.

There is already an impact from your determined efforts to improve the school's provision. Our visits to classrooms and review of pupils' workbooks confirmed that the large majority of pupils are making strong progress. Learning activities, linked across subjects where appropriate, are developing pupils' thinking and helping them to articulate ideas for their own work. Teaching staff are helping pupils, who are not fluent with basic skills in numeracy and literacy, to catch up quickly with their learning.

Pupils are polite and thoughtful. They listen well to their teachers and like to talk about their learning. Their positive learning behaviours help them to concentrate on their activities and overcome any difficulties that they find when they are working. During our learning walk, we saw some minor off-task behaviour when learning tasks were not precisely matched to some pupils' needs.

Safeguarding is effective.

The designated lead for safeguarding is ably supported by a team of other leaders and pastoral staff. Leaders and governors take their responsibilities seriously and have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a high standard of care and concern for all pupils' well-being, and particularly for vulnerable pupils. Comprehensive training has taken place to ensure that staff understand how to keep pupils safe from harm. The designated leader provides all staff with regular updates. School leaders and pastoral staff work closely with parents and other agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive the support they need in a timely way.

The school's caring ethos encourages everyone to look out for each other. Parents believe that their children are safe when they are at school and pupils confirm that

they feel safe. Pupils say that there is very little bullying at school but that if they have any concern, they can easily talk to an adult. Pupils trust the adults in school to listen to them and resolve their anxieties. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when they are using the internet, including when they are outside of school.

Inspection findings

- In my first line of enquiry, we looked at what leaders are doing to improve pupils' progress in mathematics. Historically, outcomes in mathematics have been weaker than in reading and writing. Pupils say that their lessons are interesting and many of them enjoy mathematics much more now than they did formerly.
- Although there are inconsistencies in teaching, new approaches are already having an impact to support pupils' learning. These approaches are helping pupils to deepen their understanding of the way that numbers work. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to solve interesting problems and give reasons for their thinking. We saw this in an ambitious Year 6 lesson where pupils were developing their own algebraic questions.
- Well-planned lessons help pupils to understand the reasoning behind calculation methods. Practical apparatus, pictures and symbols help pupils to work things out for themselves. Teachers encourage pupils to make correct use of mathematical language when explaining their strategies. Teachers make increasingly effective use of assessment during lessons to provide pupils with further challenge and to tackle the areas of learning that pupils find difficult.
- In 2018, disadvantaged pupils made less progress in writing and mathematics than in reading. This prompted my second line of enquiry. The school uses its additional funding well to provide highly valued pastoral and learning support for those disadvantaged pupils with the highest levels of need.
- Although teaching is carefully planned to support progress through the curriculum, learning tasks do not consistently build upon what pupils already know and can do. You have already discussed with teachers the progress of every pupil in the school and increased the expectations for all pupils' achievement. You have, rightly, implemented a particular focus on improving disadvantaged pupils' progress. Rigorous checks and timely support, such as additional teaching, are helping them to catch up.
- Most disadvantaged pupils are making progress that is in line with other pupils nationally. Pupils' workbooks show that some disadvantaged pupils are ready to be challenged even more to give them the opportunity to reach the higher standard by the end of Year 6.
- In my final line of enquiry, I reviewed whether the most able pupils are making good progress in writing. Teachers make effective links between reading and writing, and across the wider curriculum. These links ignite pupils' interest and provide high levels of challenge, such as Year 2's focus, during their 'frozen' topic, on Shackleton's voyage to the Antarctic. Year 4 pupils told me many fascinating facts about their topic on the Titanic. They have written accounts from the point of view of a passenger, effectively applying historical knowledge and complex vocabulary into their writing. We heard Year 5 pupils reflect

thoughtfully about the tensions behind the Soweto riots, which form the backdrop to their class reading book.

- Pupils do not routinely proofread their writing for technical accuracy, such as spelling. They do not learn well enough how to edit and improve their writing to make it more interesting for their reader. Consequently, some pupils, particularly those who are most able, do not develop their writing to achieve as well as they could.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should improve teaching, learning and assessment, by ensuring that:

- all teachers have strong subject knowledge, especially in English and mathematics
- learning activities build upon what pupils already know and can do
- all groups of pupils make consistently strong progress, particularly disadvantaged pupils and the most able.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda Jacobs
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held several meetings with you and with other leaders. I met with members of the governing body and two representatives from the local authority. I observed the quality of learning with you in all year groups, visiting just over half of the classes. Working with your English and mathematics subject leaders, we reviewed a sample of pupils' workbooks.

I considered a range of evidence, including: the school's performance and attendance information; the school improvement plan; leaders' self-evaluation; information on the school's website; the school's central record of recruitment checks; and safeguarding procedures and policies.

I observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, on entry to school and at playtime. As well as talking to pupils in lessons, I spoke to pupils informally on the playground to listen to their experiences of school. I spoke to parents at the beginning of the day, reviewed 107 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and took into

account 63 accompanying free-text responses. I considered 37 responses to the Ofsted online staff questionnaire and 120 pupil questionnaires.

