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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Charlotte Hall
Headteacher
Hinton St George Church of England First School
West Street
Hinton St George
Somerset
TA17 8SA

Dear Mrs Hall

Short inspection of Hinton St George Church of England First School

Following my visit to the school on 22 May 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 September 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your clear vision and determination are building well on the legacy of supportive relationships between pupils and staff and pupils' good achievement established by your predecessor. Since you took up the post as headteacher earlier this year, you have worked effectively with governors to guide the school through a period of change in the staff team. This is helping to sustain the strong focus on helping all pupils achieve the best they can.

You, other staff leaders and governors have an accurate overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are correctly pinpointing areas for improvement across the school. Your judgements and action are based on accurate monitoring and careful analysis of information about the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress.

The school's strengths include pupils' exemplary behaviour and engagement in learning and the careful way they present their work. Other striking features shown by pupils of all ages include their well-developed speaking and listening skills and high rate of attendance. These reflect their enjoyment of the school. All these attributes continue to underpin the pupils' strong progress and are represented in parents' and carers' appreciative views of the school. Parents typically commented that it is a 'wonderful caring school which has helped my child to thrive'. The unanimously positive views of staff also illustrate the caring, community feel of the school.

At the previous inspection, leaders were asked to ensure that teachers' feedback to pupils enabled them to contribute effectively to the improvement of their work. You were also advised to make sure that all leaders, including governors, evaluate the degree to which teaching promotes pupils' progress. You have successfully dealt with both these areas for improvement. However, you recognise that the proportion of pupils achieving at greater depth in mathematics is not high enough.

Safeguarding is effective.

The designated safeguarding leads work closely together to promote a strong culture of safeguarding. Procedures for checking the suitability of staff and other adults who spend time in the school are of high quality. They are recorded accurately on the school's single central register. The register also confirms that staff training is up to date in areas such as the 'Prevent' duty to protect pupils from extremism and radicalisation. You and governors frequently check the single central register to ensure that it is accurate and maintained to a high standard.

Across the school, adults supervise pupils diligently, both in and out of doors. The school's carefully compiled risks assessments show the care taken to safeguard pupils during the frequent visits they make away from school premises. Staff communicate diligently with parents and with outside agencies. Leaders ensure that these consultations are well documented and lead to actions which provide effective support for pupils and their parents. In their questionnaire responses, parents unanimously expressed the view that their children are kept safe at school. A typical parental comment was that, 'The teachers are very dedicated and caring and the school feels safe.' Pupils show a good understanding of how to stay safe, particularly when using computers. Pupils confidently say that they feel very safe at school because, 'People follow the rules and are kind to each other.'

Inspection findings

- I first looked at the effectiveness of leaders and teachers in challenging pupils, particularly the most able pupils, to achieve greater depth, especially in mathematics. Most pupils develop a range of mathematical skills at least in line with those expected for their age. Some work at greater depth, because teachers expect them to reason and think more deeply about their work. Clearly the focus across the school on developing pupils' mathematical understanding is ensuring that pupils' progress and achievement are improving. However, teachers do not provide enough activities to develop pupils' problem-solving skills fully during mathematics lessons and in other subjects.
- Second, I examined how well teachers are developing pupils' understanding of how to improve their work, and consequently strengthening their ability to learn. Leaders have given this careful and effective attention since the previous inspection. You and your staff are implementing a newly agreed system for checking pupils' work. This includes setting pupils individual targets and providing them with specific information about how to improve their work. The new system is having a positive influence on pupils' progress. Pupils respond well to teachers'

probing questioning and specific guidance. They develop good skills in editing and improving their writing and in making calculations in mathematics. Increasingly, older pupils reflect on and write explanations about their work. Pupils' demonstrate a good understanding of what to do next to improve their work, which helps them make good progress.

- I next reviewed the effectiveness of the curriculum. Teachers have worked together to plan a wide and varied curriculum that meets pupils' needs and stimulates their interest and enthusiasm for learning. Work in geography, history and science is based on motivating themes such as 'Come fly with me.' Such topics are often accompanied by an initial question to challenge pupils and deepen their thinking, in this example 'Where will we land?' Pupils' work in books showed their positive responses when researching the question, 'What is it like today?' during a topic on Ancient Britain. When questioned, pupils clearly expressed their enjoyment in learning and good gains in knowledge, skill and understanding.
- Teachers find interesting ways to weave and enrich pupils' reading and writing skills through curriculum topics. As a result, the proportions of pupils working at expected and higher levels of skill in reading and writing are above those expected for their age. Parents appreciate the breadth of learning activities the school provides. One parent reflected the views of most in saying the school gives pupils, 'a wealth of opportunities'. This was seen, for example, during the inspection as pupils joyfully re-enacted the recent Royal Wedding ceremony and celebrations.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they strengthen the approach to the teaching of mathematics so that pupils develop good problem-solving skills across the range of subjects, and an increased proportion achieves at a greater depth.

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

Alexander Baxter

Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and other staff who have leadership responsibilities and with governors of the school. I visited classrooms with you and we collected and scrutinised samples of pupils' work in books. I talked with individual pupils during visits to classrooms and during the lunchtime break. I observed a teacher listening to selected pupils reading and talked to them about the school. In addition, I examined a range of documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' attendance, pupils' progress and the school's self-evaluation and development. I took account of 34 responses to the Ofsted online Parent View survey and 36 additional written comments from parents. I also took account of 11 responses to the staff survey.