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Mrs Elizabeth Allbutt
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Dear Mrs Allbutt

Short inspection of All Saints C of E (A) First School

Following my visit to the school on 22 June 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. Under your leadership, the school continues to offer a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment. Pupils are encouraged to develop as individuals and all are valued. You provide strong and consistent direction for the school and are well supported by your staff. You and the deputy headteacher have an impressive understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school development plan accurately identifies the next steps for the school and how these will be achieved. Your evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate.

The school offers pupils unique learning experiences through its focus on 'enabling children to develop the skills they need to be effective, enthusiastic learners in the 21st century'. The curriculum helps promote the school's values, including 'putting children at the heart of everything', which forms the basis of the work the school does. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and greatly value the work of staff. One parent summed up the views of many when she said: 'All Saints is a brilliant school. My daughters are so happy. Their progress in maths and English is fantastic and the communication between the school and parents is excellent.'

Staff take pride in working at the school and are committed to the learning of all pupils. Lessons are planned effectively to allow pupils to make good progress. You are rightly aware that there is scope to provide even more demanding learning tasks and opportunities within your curriculum for pupils to practise their core skills. These will give all pupils further opportunities to achieve their very best.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above the national average. Pupils want to do well, work hard and thrive in the calm, orderly and aspirational environment. Pupils are polite, friendly, well behaved and respectful towards each other and adults. There is a strong sense of belonging to the school community. As one parent confirmed: 'There is a great sense of pride in being a part of the school community from pupils, leaders, teachers and parents alike.' The school's Christian character, values and ethos permeate all aspects of the school's work and are evident in the way pupils support and care for each other.

Pupils are provided with a wide range of interesting learning opportunities that are based on practical experiences. During the inspection, I observed pupils learning how to recognise different plant seeds and investigating how they germinate. This was part of their science investigation work. In art, they used tablets to search the internet to identify common features in Andy Warhol's paintings. I observed a delightful whole-school assembly, where pupils were genuinely happy to celebrate others' successes. Pupils benefit from activities such as these every day at All Saints. The school site and grounds are used effectively to further enhance pupils' learning opportunities. These include exploring in the various pathways leading to the outdoor learning areas and school garden. Pupils are enthused by the curriculum. Parents recognise it as a unique feature of the school and greatly value the experiences their children benefit from. The curriculum is carefully planned, linking subjects so that the content of the national curriculum is covered while the school keeps to its vision of pupils always 'being inquisitive, curious and keen to understand'.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve the consistency of teachers' assessment. You have responded well to this recommendation, and the standard of pupils' work in the school remains good. Leaders were also asked to develop the skills of subject leaders so that they play a greater part in monitoring and evaluating teaching and achievement in their areas of responsibility. Subject leaders now routinely check the progress of different groups of pupils in their subjects through systems that have been introduced to assess pupils' understanding. Governors are provided with useful information that allows them to monitor carefully the achievement of all pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is effective. Well-established systems and processes mean that record-keeping is good. Concerns raised are quickly and effectively managed, either by the school or with the support of other professional agencies. Staff are knowledgeable and benefit from relevant training that meets statutory requirements. There are effective systems in place to ensure that the right checks are carried out on people before they start work in the school.

Pupils speak confidently about how to keep themselves safe. This includes when they are online, and they can explain in detail what they have learned at school to help them do this. The curriculum includes meaningful opportunities for pupils to

evaluate risk and make well-informed decisions about how to stay safe. Parents rightly trust the school to take good care of their children, and appreciate the work of leaders to support them and their families.

Inspection findings

- At the beginning of this inspection, we agreed to focus on how effectively school leaders ensure that teaching provides opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their understanding at a deeper level. We agreed to look at the teaching of phonics and why standards at key stage 1 have varied. We also agreed to look at how successful leaders are in improving children's progress in the early years.
- Leaders have begun to take effective action to ensure that pupils have opportunities to deepen their learning in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress is monitored through the careful analysis of their work and assessment information. As a result, pupils who fall behind receive carefully targeted support where they need it, and this allows them to catch up with their peers. The small number of disadvantaged pupils benefit particularly from this additional support. However, pupils are not always routinely challenged in their work. This often hampers them in developing a deeper understanding and achieving their very best in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The next key line of enquiry focused on the teaching of phonics and the reasons for the fluctuating outcomes in the phonics screening check over the past three years. The school has recognised this concern and is ensuring that strong progress in reading for all pupils is a priority for improvement. Your sharpened focus on phonics is proving to be successful; early analysis of results for summer 2018 are very positive. Staff now track pupils' progress in phonics, identifying gaps in understanding at an early stage and putting in place appropriate support for pupils. On our visits to lessons, we saw pupils using their developing phonics skills well.
- Children generally start in early years with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning. In 2017, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was slightly below the national figure. Children currently in Reception are making good progress overall and are clearly on track to achieve stronger outcomes by the end of the year. Children are making rapid progress in the areas of learning in which they had the lowest starting points. These areas include reading, writing and understanding the world.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the curriculum includes more challenging activities to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding and for them to practise core skills.

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

Steven Cartlidge
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held several meetings with you and other leaders. I met with three governors and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I considered the 110 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 55 written comments on the free-text facility. You accompanied me on visits to classrooms. I talked to pupils about their learning and spoke to parents on the morning of the visit. I looked at pupils' books and listened to a range of pupils read as they worked in lessons. The 27 staff and 20 pupil surveys that were completed were used to gauge their opinions about working and learning at the school. I also evaluated a range of school documentation, including school development plans, safeguarding records and information about current pupils' achievement.