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5 May 2017

Mr Philip Brown  
Headteacher  
All Saints Maldon Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School  
Highlands Drive  
Maldon  
Essex  
CM9 6HY

Dear Mr Brown

### **Short inspection of All Saints Maldon Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 March 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 November 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and your team ensure that there is a culture of high expectation among staff. Strong teamwork underpins recent successes, with staff happily supporting each other to improve their teaching. The governors describe you as someone who has a passion for the school and it is clear that you are ambitious to make the school the best it can be. You were appointed as headteacher in September 2015, having previously acted as joint headteacher of the school. A seamless transition into your new role meant that you were able to tackle areas of weakness quickly. You lead the school with a strong conviction and a clear vision for the school's future development. The local authority has confidence in your leadership and your ability to further improve the school.

The school has a purposeful atmosphere, where the pupils work well together, listen to ideas and welcome opportunities to be part of the Maldon community, for example by playing in the school band at civic events. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were almost unanimous in their view that pupils are taught well and are safe and happy. One parent commented that her children skip into school happy and come out with a smile, full of chatter about their day and what they have been learning about. Pupils enjoy school and demonstrate high levels of engagement in lessons.

They work cooperatively and purposefully together. Pupils told me proudly of the responsibilities they have in school; these include roles such as school and eco councillors. They particularly like the achievement board for each class, where they can celebrate each other's successes.

The new chair of governors has worked successfully with you to ensure that all governors have the information they need to hold you and other school leaders to account. The governors use their increased understanding of the school to question leaders more closely and challenge them to improve teaching and pupils' achievement further. They are passionate about ensuring that pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum because they want them to leave the school as well-rounded individuals. Governors are well placed to offer appropriate support and challenge to you and your leadership team to make the school even better.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is effective. Checks on staff to ascertain their suitability for working with children are comprehensive and meet current guidance. You work with an increasing number of children and families who need support and you maintain meticulous records relating to this work. You meet weekly with the governor who has responsibility for safeguarding to monitor actions taken and ensure the safety and well-being of pupils. You are not afraid to make strong representations to external agencies on behalf of pupils and their families when you feel even more could be done to improve pupils' safety and well-being. You ensure that swift and effective action is taken to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

All members of staff and governors receive regular safeguarding training and are clear about school procedures to keep children safe. Staff are vigilant and sensitive to the signs of abuse and neglect. As a result of your work, pupils say that they feel safe while in school. Pupils also know how to keep themselves safe when working online. They have a good understanding of grooming and can talk confidently about what to do when people pretend online to be someone different. You also work with parents on internet safety and a very large proportion of your parents have attended e-safety meetings.

### **Inspection findings**

- During my visit, I looked at the progress that disadvantaged pupils are currently making. I chose this area in light of the 2016 test results, which indicated that these pupils did not perform as well as others, and to test if poor attendance had been a cause of their relative underperformance. Also, there was limited information on the school's website about the impact or effectiveness of the additional funding that the school receives for disadvantaged pupils. The school's current progress information and the work I saw in books across the school indicate that the majority of this group of pupils are currently achieving well. Staff are now more aware of these pupils and track their progress carefully, providing additional support where it is needed.

- Higher-attaining disadvantaged pupils are performing particularly well in some classes. For example, an extra teacher worked closely with higher-attaining pupils in Year 4, and this resulted in some high-quality work in science lessons. It is clear that you have recently identified specific barriers for learning and put greater focus on the individual pupil's progress. You and your governors are not complacent and know that there is further work to be done to ensure that the way funding is used tackles the specific needs of each individual pupil and that more specific regular reporting is required. For example, you are aware that, despite new initiatives such as weekly attendance targets and awards for classes and individuals, the overall attendance of disadvantaged pupils is not improving. Pupils with higher absence rates are not achieving as well as other pupils and this is an area that you have identified as requiring further improvement.
- The second area I focused on was achievement in writing because, over time, results have not been as strong in writing as in other subject areas. You were aware of this relative weakness and have supported your subject leaders in identifying what would make the most difference to the quality of writing. The subject leaders have focused on the consistency of how writing is taught across the school, and introduced a clear whole-school writing process linked to reading, personal experiences and teamwork. Year 6 pupils proudly discussed this approach and other strategies such as visualisation of scenes, talking about what they want to write about before they write and using drama to enact scenes. They rightly observed that this had made a positive contribution to the improvements in their writing. Good-quality writing was seen across the school in English and other subjects. In the foundation stage, by following children's own interests, the class teacher has provided more high-quality writing experiences, especially for boys, which had been an area of weakness in the past. You have identified that more time is now needed for pupils to edit work to make it even better, including improving spelling as part of their writing work across subjects.
- The third area I followed up was pupils' attainment and the development of skills in science, due to the science results being lower than the national average last year. The subject leader had undertaken a review of science teaching and identified that pupils did not have the required investigative skills. Staff now regularly demonstrate how to conduct science experiments before providing pupils with the opportunity to think scientifically and investigate for themselves. You are now keen for pupils to have more opportunities to develop their own ideas for scientific investigations.
- Finally, I looked at the school's use of the sports premium, as the information on the school website was not up to date. This is being used effectively to increase pupils' participation in competitive sports with local schools. The funding is also being used to employ a sports coach who works alongside teachers, supporting their skills in teaching physical education.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' spelling continues to improve in accuracy and they have opportunities to edit their work to improve it further
- the attendance levels for disadvantaged pupils improve
- the pupil premium grant is directly linked to the specific needs of disadvantaged pupils and regular checks are made to show that it is having the desired impact.

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

Yours sincerely

Cassandra Williams  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

- During the inspection, I met with you and your senior leadership team, as well as other members of staff with leadership responsibility. I also met with four of your governors and talked with the local authority adviser.
- You accompanied me when I visited classrooms. I also observed pupils as they moved around the school. I conducted a scrutiny of pupils' literacy and science books. I also met with a group of pupils.
- I took account of the 107 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- I considered the school's analysis of pupils' recent performance.
- I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep children safe and records of training and safeguarding checks.