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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Paul Daniels
Principal
Dursley Church of England Primary Academy
Highfields
Dursley
Gloucestershire
GL11 4NZ

Dear Mr Daniels

Short inspection of Dursley Church of England Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 29 January 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. The stability you brought to leadership of the school has helped you develop a strong team of teachers and leaders. Together, you have continued to improve teaching and pupils' achievement. Recently, you brought the established on-site Nursery under the school's leadership. Children make a good start to their education in the Reception Year. You are now working to give continuity of high-quality education for children from Nursery age. The school is popular within the community and is in the process of expanding to two-form entry.

Parents and pupils value what the school provides through its exciting curriculum. Pupils are proud of the school's choir that recently performed well in a national singing festival. They enjoy the special 'together time' where they acquire wider skills such as 'street dance'. Almost all parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire saw the school as offering their children a well-rounded education. A typical comment was, 'an inclusive school that treats pupils as individuals and instils good values like friendship and kindness as well as facilitating academic learning'.

At the previous inspection the school was asked to strengthen the role of new governors and clarify the school improvement plan. Governors are effective in their roles and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and what still needs to improve. The school improvement plan sets out how priorities will be tackled. Currently, the targets in the school improvement plan only relate to final outcomes at the end of key stage 2. Consequently, your actions to improve the school cannot

be measured quickly enough to see if they are securing the intended impact on teaching and pupils' progress. The previous inspection highlighted the need for teachers to challenge the most able pupils, including in mathematics. Over time, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics has been above the national average. You have developed the breadth of the curriculum in mathematics considerably. Teachers' subject knowledge has been enhanced through high-quality professional development. Nonetheless, mathematics remained an area of enquiry for this inspection because standards overall in mathematics have not matched those in other subjects.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have established effective policies and procedures to support pupils' safety. Staff are well trained in safeguarding practice. A group of senior leaders, under the guidance of the headteacher, advise staff how to manage concerns that a pupil may be at risk. Leaders are confident about making referrals to a wide range of children's agencies when required. They are proactive in working with outside services to ensure that liaison between agencies offers families the best support.

Governors regularly monitor the school's work to safeguard pupils, including making checks on issues of health and safety. The trust ensures that activities such as the current building works are assessed for their risk and that steps are taken to ensure that pupils and staff are safe. The school has well-kept records of checks made on the suitability of adults who work with pupils.

Pupils and their parents feel that the school is a safe place. Pupils can explain how they are taught to use the internet safely. A small number of parents felt that the school did not tackle bullying quickly enough, but this was not the opinion of pupils. They say the school's values of forgiveness and respect help them to make good relationships. Through the school's curriculum, pupils learn to recognise and challenge bullying. They have great confidence in the support offered by staff.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection I reviewed pupils' progress in mathematics across key stage 2. I also reviewed the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and the progress of boys in writing in key stage 1. My last area of enquiry was to undertake a review of the school's Nursery.
- Recent changes to the mathematics curriculum have promoted pupils' enjoyment of the subject. The pupils that I spoke to said that mathematics is interesting and challenging. Leaders use assessment to manage the mixed-age classes and keep teaching groups under review to ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement to the curriculum. Recent assessments, visits to class and examples of pupils' work show that there is a high level of challenge for the most able pupils. For example, a group of Year 4 pupils responded well when challenged to convert mixed fractions of money to calculate and find a missing amount. They worked accurately and confidently. Pupils' work across key stage 2 shows that all teachers regularly challenge pupils' thinking.

- Teachers ask pupils to explain their mathematical thinking verbally and in written work. Discussion with pupils and reviews of their work highlighted that some pupils struggle to do this concisely. For example, some do not use mathematical terminology, but rather try to explain in their own words. These pupils do not then show the level of understanding needed to reach the expected standard. Teachers promote the use of correct terminology, but are not yet overcoming pupils' misconceptions well enough for more to catch up to the expected standard at the end of key stage 2.
- The proportion of pupils in the school with SEND is much higher than the national average and a significant proportion of these pupils are also disadvantaged. Leaders use targeted funding to promote achievement and inclusion. For example, pupils receive additional and effective support through 'The Nest', the school's nurture provision. Pupils are helped to gain confidence through learning opportunities such as the recent successful drama project. The school works closely with parents and involves them in supporting their children's progress and engagement with learning.
- Leaders are ambitious for pupils with SEND and have high expectations for their achievement. Pupils' learning needs are met well in class, where skilled teaching assistants support them. Workbooks show that a proportion of pupils with SEND are now working well within the expected standards for their age. Last year's end of key stage 2 assessments showed that effective support had enabled a number of pupils to transfer to their secondary school with the expected level of attainment. Pupils' needs are regularly reviewed by the school to ensure that extra teaching helps all to make progress.
- I next discussed the school's recent assessments of boys' writing, to review particularly whether younger boys are making good progress. Leaders identified writing as an area for improvement because in the past there has been a gap between boys' and girls' progress. Currently, this is not the case. I reviewed boys' writing in key stage 1 and found that almost all are entering Year 1 able to form letters accurately and so are ready to write and express their ideas. This reflects the now higher standards reached at the end of the Reception Year. For example, the proportion of children attaining the early learning goal in writing is in line with national average. The small numbers of boys who need still to catch up to their peers are making progress with additional support.
- Leaders of the multi-academy trust have sought advice for school leaders on the development of leadership, teaching and welfare arrangements in the Nursery. Currently, some administrative arrangements in relation to the transfer have yet to be completed. The premises offer extensive resources for children to play and learn. There are, for example, facilities for two-year-old children to rest and have toileting needs attended to. There are good arrangements for snacks and meals. Staff are qualified for their roles and safeguarding arrangements are in place.
- Early years staff in Reception have begun to work with the Nursery staff to develop children's learning opportunities. Children behave well in the Nursery and relationships are warm and encouraging. However, currently, assessment is not always used sharply enough to support children when they first start in the setting. Staff do not then have a clear picture of how to promote, for example,

the children's skills of communication and language.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans for improvement show how actions will be measured and evaluated to secure the desired outcomes
- teachers develop pupils' ability to explain their mathematical reasoning using accurate vocabulary, so that more reach and exceed the expected standard for their age
- new leadership and administration of the Nursery are secured quickly, so that procedures and practice contribute effectively to children's welfare and achievement.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Gloucester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Gloucestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Marriott
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy principal. I also met with a group of governors and representatives of the Diocese of Gloucester Academy Trust. I visited classes with you and spoke to pupils about their work. I also visited the Nursery. Together, we reviewed a sample of pupils' work in English and mathematics. I took account of the school's latest assessment information and the evaluations of the school's work you had prepared. I reviewed the current school improvement plan. I discussed safeguarding with members of staff and made checks on the school's procedures and policies for safeguarding. I met with a group of pupils to gather their views of the school. I met with parents at the start of the school day. I also took account of parents' views of the school through the 51 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the additional written comments. The views of staff were considered through the 18 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.