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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Miss Mandy Bridges
Headteacher
Fawkham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Valley Road
Fawkham
Longfield
Kent
DA3 8NA

Dear Miss Bridges

Short inspection of Fawkham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

You have created a vibrant school that lies at the heart of the community. There is a strong, caring, family atmosphere which is appreciated by pupils and their parents. A group of pupils agreed with one who said: 'We're like a big family. We know everyone. We're all friends and always help each other out.' Pupils spoken to were unanimous in their praise for the school and their teachers. They were hard-pressed to think of anything to change, saying: 'We like it just the way it is.' Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They said that their teachers make lessons fun and explain everything to them really well. Pupils want to do well, work hard and take a pride in their achievements and the presentation of their work. They are polite, friendly and respectful of each other and of adults. They embody the school's values, enjoy their leadership roles and behave exceptionally well.

You lead the school with determination and total commitment to ensure that pupils receive a good education. Your ambition and expectation for pupils and staff are high. All staff have every confidence in your leadership and are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the aspirational culture within the school. The professional support and challenge they receive enhance and develop their expertise.

Despite numerous staff changes since the previous inspection, your high standards have ensured that strong teaching enables pupils to learn well. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well. In 2017, the proportion of pupils who achieved age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 was above the national average, and many achieved beyond this.

There is no complacency, but a shared determination and team effort to provide the best experiences for pupils. A parent commented: 'The headteacher and teachers are positive, enthusiastic and strive for the best for the children in the school in terms of results and well-being.' You provide effective support for pupils who may be falling behind or who need extra input to secure their learning confidently. Issues highlighted for improvement at the last inspection have been addressed and, in particular, you have increased the use of your outdoor spaces to support learning. Teachers use the information from their assessment of pupils' achievements well to help plan their targets and next steps. Leaders and governors effectively monitor the school's work to identify areas for further improvement. For example, an increased number of opportunities for pupils to write has had a positive impact on their achievement. You now have plans to review your curriculum, focusing on increasing pupils' depth of achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. The 'family feel' in the school means that staff know the pupils very well and are alert to any potential problems. Staff receive regular training, know the procedures to follow and are vigilant in doing so. Your systems for recording concerns are effective and you liaise well with external agencies when necessary. Governors are well informed about safeguarding and check the effectiveness of the school's records to keep pupils safe.

Pupils said that they feel very safe in school and that they can always talk to staff if they have any problems. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. E-safety ambassadors ensure that pupils and parents are well informed about staying safe online. Parents agree that their children are kept safe and are well cared for. After a dip last year, you have worked successfully to highlight the importance of regular attendance and it is currently above the national average.

Inspection findings

- At the beginning of the inspection, as well as looking at the effectiveness of safeguarding, we agreed to focus on: pupils' achievement in mathematics compared to that in reading and writing; leaders' engagement with parents and how effectively they carry out their statutory duties; and how well the curriculum supports the learning of all groups.
- In 2017, not as many Year 6 pupils achieved the highest standard in mathematics when compared to reading and writing. As a result of the successful actions taken, more pupils, in all year groups, are working beyond the expected

standard. Effective and strong leadership in the subject has focused on pupils' confident reasoning skills and fluency in using and applying their knowledge. Teachers have also ensured that mathematics is taught in a meaningful way. For example, pupils appreciate that knowing their multiplication tables helps them to calculate areas of rectangles.

- You have established good communication and trusting partnerships with governors, who share your vision and ambition for the school. The governing body holds you and other leaders to account effectively for the school's performance and meets all of the required statutory duties. Only a small proportion of parents responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Taking their responses and those of the school's own questionnaire together, it is clear that most parents are positive about the school. A few parents, however, expressed concern over the numerous staff changes that have taken place over the past few years. You and the governors are acutely aware of this and agree to the necessity of keeping parents informed without breaching confidentiality issues. One parent wrote of the leadership: 'They get all the parents involved and update us regularly. I would highly recommend this school.'
- You ensure that the skills and expertise of your staff are used effectively to ensure high-quality provision and pupils' good achievement in a range of subjects. Leaders ensure that activities meet the needs as well as the interests of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Your curriculum is enriched by many visits and special events, which provide memorable learning experiences for pupils, both academically and in their personal development. Opportunities are not always planned for pupils to make connections in their learning across the foundation subjects and with their core subject work.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the curriculum further develops pupils' depth of knowledge, skills and understanding across the foundation subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, your deputy headteacher and other leaders in the school. I also met with the chair of the governing body and four other governors. I had a telephone

conversation with a school improvement representative from the local authority and the diocese. You accompanied me on my visits to classes. I talked with pupils during lessons and looked at the work in their books. I observed pupils during lunchtime and in the playground as well as meeting with a group of pupils to discuss their views of the school. I took account of 25 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 12 free-text comments. As this was quite a small response, I also looked at 49 responses to your own questionnaire for parents. I spoke with some parents at the start of the school day. I also considered seven responses to Ofsted's staff survey. I reviewed the school's website and sampled a range of school documents, including information about pupils' achievement, the school improvement plan and documents relating to safeguarding. We discussed your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness.