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Mr Phil Goldsworthy
Headteacher
Christopher Rawlins Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
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Dear Mr Goldsworthy

Short inspection of Christopher Rawlins Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 March 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. Aspects of the school's work are extremely strong now. You know what the school does well and you also know the few remaining areas for further development. Your work is based entirely on evidence. You have a comprehensive and intelligent system for tracking pupils' progress. You are able to look at this information skilfully and from many different angles. As such, you spot quickly any emerging patterns or trends and act immediately to make adjustments to either provision or the quality of teachers' or pupils' performance.

You have built a strong team over time. Staff turnover is low, reflecting what they told us: they enjoy working at Christopher Rawlins and are proud of their contribution. You are held in high regard by the vast majority of staff and parents and carers. You are popular with the pupils, who see you around the school regularly. You are aided well by your assistant headteacher, and expert leadership of early years. The work of the special educational needs coordinator is equally effective.

Moreover, you benefit from experienced and effective governors. They know their roles well and hold you to account for the school's performance. For example, governors challenged you about why outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check, in 2015, were lower than the national averages. You responded professionally and expertly to the challenge. The impact of this has been the

impressive and rapid improvement of these results over the last two years. Standards in reading and mathematics also improved from 2016 to 2017, due to a sharp focus on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All classrooms are rich learning environments where there are all sorts of resources and materials to aid pupils' learning. Teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to supporting pupils' work. They support the development of pupils' correct use of English and probe them with good-quality questioning to test their understanding.

You ensure that teaching is purposeful and productive and that teachers work collaboratively and collectively to reduce, where possible, unnecessary workload. You are carrying forward this strong leadership practice into the planning for the school's intended expansion. Your recent adroit management of the ongoing building programme is a good example of how you ensure that necessary changes have a low impact on the performance of the school. You are already trialling the provision of mixed-age classes in key stage 1. This is eminently sensible, so that teachers in Years 1 and 2 get an early understanding of how to maintain standards of progress and attainment while managing pupils at different ages and stages of their learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

All members of the community contribute effectively to this aspect of the school's work. Parents observe the school's requirements relating to drop-off and pick-up at the beginning and end of each day. This is essential given the school's close proximity to the intersection of two major trunk roads.

Pupils behave in ways that support each other's safety and well-being. They play well together and make good use of the outside spaces during breaks and lunchtimes. In class, their conduct is extremely good and they display very positive attitudes to their learning. They were unfailingly polite when speaking with me. Their enthusiasm for school is endearing.

Governors oversee rigorously all aspects of the school's safeguarding work. They participate tenaciously in processes relating to the safe recruitment and selection of staff. They check the school's single central record regularly. Governors also contribute their professional expertise to risk assessments. Notably, they have ensured that there is no risk to the health and safety of pupils during the building works. Their training on safeguarding is up to date and of good quality.

Leaders ensure that staff are similarly kept informed regularly about updates to safeguarding requirements. They use the school's programme of assemblies and personal, social, health and economic education to teach pupils about ways of staying safe. Pupils say that they feel safe at school and that they know how to keep themselves safe in online contexts. The vast majority of parents also believe that their children are safe in school.

Inspection findings

- This inspection was conducted to establish why outcomes in writing were historically not as strong as those in reading or mathematics. It was also, with your agreement, undertaken to explore whether or not boys are doing as well as girls, and to examine how effective you and school leaders are at driving necessary improvements.
- We agreed that standards in writing had been weaker in the past than those in reading or mathematics. We also agreed that children get a flying start to their time in school. All the parents I spoke to were fulsome in their praise for the quality of education in early years. Consequently, by the time children enter key stage 1, they are reading well and communicating effectively. Teachers are currently working to ensure that from these high standards on entry, pupils continue to make rapid progress.
- You also showed me compelling evidence that standards in writing are continuing to improve in key stage 2, with some really strong examples of pupils' writing over time. For example, pupils had created some fine pieces of work relating to a visit to North Devon where they had reflected on the devastating effects of flooding on human communities.
- This piece of work exemplifies well the school's commitment to a broad curriculum and to a wide range of enriching experiences. Teachers are adept at finding interesting stimuli for pupils' writing, making cross-curricular links and providing opportunities for pupils to build their knowledge and understanding of the world.
- This work sits nicely within the abundantly clear Christian ethos of the school. Leaders' commitment to aiding pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is admirable, as is the strong commitment to pupils' physical health and well-being. The range of sports clubs and activities, including the whole day committed to physical health, is admirable. You are constantly striving to build pupils' resilience and their mental health and well-being too.
- Teachers plan learning carefully, so that it is purposeful and meaningful in each lesson. There is great consistency in the levels of performance from class to class. You showed me the steps you have taken to achieve this. You also showed me how you have provided expert external help to ensure that teachers are trained to meet the demands of the new curriculum, especially in supporting pupils' writing.
- There remains a difference between the quality of girls' work and the standards attained by boys. This is easily solved. Teachers must expect the same levels of effort and presentation from boys and girls; they must challenge untidy or inaccurate work as soon as it occurs.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvements in pupils' writing continue to quicken so that pupils convert their strong outcomes in phonics and reading into higher average progress scores
- boys' performance continues to improve and gets closer to that of girls.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Hughes
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

You led me on a tour of the school. We visited all classes in early years and all classes in key stage 2. The teachers in Year 1 and Year 2 accompanied six children from each of their classes, who showed me their writing and topic books. I also met with seven pupils from Year 5. I took into account 107 responses to Ofsted's confidential online pupil survey. I also considered 22 responses to Ofsted's confidential online staff survey and spoke with several of the teachers while we were touring the school. I met seven parents informally and considered 71 responses to Parent View, and considered 40 free-text comments submitted via that survey tool. I met the school's system leader, who is a partner headteacher. I met with five members of the governing body. I reviewed a wide range of the school's documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance, your list of priorities, and your current action plan.