

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mr Andrew Denham  
Headteacher  
Standlake Church of England Primary School  
Standlake  
Witney  
Oxfordshire  
OX29 7SQ

Dear Mr Denham

### **Short inspection of Standlake Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 June 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in February 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your arrival in September 2014, you have quickly identified the correct areas for further improvement, and your relentless determination has led to pupils making good and sustained progress. You are highly ambitious for Standlake and this can be seen in all aspects of school life. Parents are supportive of the school. As one parent said, 'The headteacher demonstrates strong values and a real care for the children.' Teachers and teaching assistants have undertaken a valuable range of training to increase their expertise. You work effectively with Eynsham Partnership Academy and other partner schools to source additional valuable training for teachers. You have reinvigorated teaching and learning, and consequently it meets the needs of groups of pupils more effectively.

Leadership is a key strength at all levels. School leaders are very supportive of your ethos and vision. The refinements that you have made to teaching and learning are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. Leaders ensure that there is a strong culture of high aspiration for pupils. Staff work hard to ensure that the work set for pupils is pitched correctly so that it accelerates further pupils' progress. Governors are highly confident of your leadership. They have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors and school leaders work closely together to correctly identify key areas to be addressed. Governors use their knowledge well to support and challenge you and your leaders to improve pupils' achievement. One governor said, 'We are acutely aware of our duty to our pupils.' They visit school regularly to carry out a range of useful tasks to evaluate the

effectiveness of the school, including monitoring safeguarding arrangements and pupils' attendance. As a result of this very strong leadership, the school continues to be good, and is improving.

Standlake is a very happy school where pupils support each other. Pupils are supervised well and have clear routines. As a result, pupils' behaviour is good. Adults in the school support pupils' learning very well. One pupil said, 'They talk you through the work, to help you understand.' Pupils say that work is sufficiently challenging for them. In lessons, pupils are highly engaged, and learning activities are appropriate to their needs. Pupils take pride in their work and are very appreciative of the adults who help them learn. Pupils say they have no concerns about bullying, and if it did happen they know that it would be dealt with swiftly. During playtimes, pupils of all ages play together happily in a caring and supportive environment. One pupil said, 'Everyone is really nice to each other.' Pupils are highly positive about the school and value their headteacher and other staff.

Achievement continues to be good. The proportion of children in the Reception Year reaching a good level of development is consistently above the national average. In the Year 1 phonics screening check, pupils' attainment has been above the national average for the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard. In the 2016 national key stage 1 assessments, the majority of pupils achieved the expected standard for their age in reading, writing, phonics and mathematics. However, pupils in key stage 2 did not achieve as well as expected in reading, writing and mathematics. You and your team evaluated carefully the reasons for the dip in these results and rightly put in place an effective range of measures to accelerate pupils' progress. You have an unrelenting drive to improve achievement, and recognise, correctly, that there remain some pupils who could make even better progress, especially in reading and mathematics.

You have addressed effectively the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Teachers' expectations of pupils are much higher now, linked to the newly introduced pupil targets in reading, writing and mathematics. Your system to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress is thorough. Consequently, you are able to track achievement precisely so that teachers can respond quickly to any dip in achievement. Disadvantaged pupils are now making good progress due to the appropriate support they receive. Although attendance is improving, you rightly recognise that there is still some work to do to ensure that pupils' achievement is not hampered by poor attendance.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is rightly your main priority and you have ensured that a culture of vigilance is apparent in all aspects of school life. Safeguarding is always discussed at staff and governor meetings. Standlake offers pupils a very caring, safe and secure environment. Recruitment checks when employing staff are fit for purpose. You provide ongoing training so that everyone knows what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. The school works well with outside agencies to support families.

Governors have a good knowledge of safeguarding and ensure that systems are reviewed and evaluated appropriately. The governor responsible for safeguarding visits the school regularly to check the systems for safer recruitment and other safeguarding matters.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, for example through lessons, assemblies, and material displayed on class information boards. They are also taught how to keep safe when using the internet. Staff support pupils well so that they feel happy, and parents state that their children are safe at school.

## **Inspection findings**

- During the inspection we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including: the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements; how the teaching of reading enables different groups of pupils to make good progress; how the teaching of mathematics ensures that different groups are challenged; and how well leaders and governors are improving pupils' attendance.
- The deputy headteacher has accurately identified the strengths and areas for development in reading. Teachers track progress very carefully and offer additional support to support pupils' reading when needed. The valuable staff training on evaluating pupils' reading and the teaching of phonics is further supporting staff in ensuring that pupils make good progress. Additional reading books have been wisely purchased for pupils, and this now enables them to have a much wider variety of texts to choose from. The increased emphasis on the teaching of reading in class is helping pupils to have a deeper understanding of a range of texts. Pupils enjoy reading, and a group of Year 5 pupils has set up a lunchtime reading club. The profile of reading for some lower-attaining pupils has been further raised by providing them with additional adult support and resources. These pupils have been accurately identified as they need to make greater progress to achieve as well as they can.
- The new mathematics leader has clearly recognised how to promote further pupils' achievement in this subject. The new calculation policy has ensured that there is now a greater consistency across the school in how pupils write down their sums. Consequently, pupils are now making strong progress in mathematics. Pupils persevere well in lessons on mathematical problems and support each other effectively. Teaching assistants support pupils well to further accelerate their progress, especially when teaching a small group. Adults ask carefully worded questions to extend pupils' thinking and reasoning skills. Pupils' books clearly indicate that they are making good progress. However, some pupils, especially the most able, could make even better progress.
- You rightly ensure that pupils' progress is not affected by frequent absence. You encourage good attendance in several ways, including through newsletters, support from outside agencies, assemblies and awarding pupils certificates. You rightly monitor and check the attendance of groups of pupils, and support parents to ensure that their child's attendance improves. The governing body checks attendance rates as governors know wisely that this is a main area to help accelerate pupils' achievement. Your robust approach has improved current pupils'

attendance, and the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school has reduced. However, some pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not yet attend regularly enough.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- high expectations are sustained in reading, especially for the lower-attaining pupils, so that rates of progress continue to accelerate
- more pupils, especially the most able pupils, exceed the standards expected for their age in mathematics
- pupils' attendance continues to improve for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

Darren Aisthorpe  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the mathematics leader, four governors, a group of pupils and representatives from the multi-academy trust. I spoke with parents before and after school, considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 38 written comments, and responses to the school's latest parent and staff questionnaire. Together with you, I visited all classes to see pupil's learning, and examined the work in their English and mathematics books. I also examined pupils' reading-record books and teachers' 'guiding-reading' files. I observed pupils at breaktime and spoke with them informally. I also considered a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, school self-evaluation and development planning, governance and pupils' progress.