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Mrs Sue Mellor
Headteacher
Aston All Saints CofE (A) Primary School
Lodge Lane
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Dear Mrs Mellor

Short inspection of Aston All Saints CofE (A) Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 September 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

Since becoming an academy, your school has undergone substantial changes to the staffing structure within the school. You have restructured your leadership team, enabling you to utilise the strengths of your current staff. Middle leaders have taken on key roles of responsibility within the school and are working well under your effective guidance and leadership.

You have tackled weaker teaching, utilising the strong support you receive from the trust. You monitor outcomes rigorously, and this has enabled you to put support in place where needed. School improvement work focuses on the areas you have identified in your development plan. Last year, you successfully improved outcomes in mathematics, grammar and spelling across the school. You are rightly targeting writing across the school and English in key stage 1 as your key priorities for the new academic year. New leaders have carried out detailed analysis, identifying barriers to learning and pinpointing what needs to be improved. However, leaders have not produced any action plans through which they will deliver the improvements needed.

Governors are passionate about the work they do. They present as a 'strong force' and work closely with you and your leadership team to improve standards. As part of their role, they work in classrooms to check on the improvements you discuss at governors' meetings. Your parent governors listen to the views of other parents, and pass on information appropriately. Governors have provided support to you when you have made some difficult decisions.

Your staff team is positive about the changes you have made. There is a strong team ethos. You have successfully managed to implement the changes needed, and keep staff morale high. You allow teachers to try out new ideas, and you provide training and support to enable them to be successful. The new writing programme in Year 5 was so successful last year that you are rolling it out across the school. Teachers are happy in their work and you hold them fully accountable for standards in their class.

You celebrate learning through a range of high-quality displays, which showcase high standards of writing, alongside artwork. Pupils enjoy all the curriculum subjects, particularly science, French, art and music. You offer a wide range of musical activities and provide many opportunities for pupils to learn a variety of instruments. Attendance remains well above the national average and you regularly receive awards from the local authority in recognition of good attendance.

You celebrate your close church links through assemblies, singing and visits. Pupils take part in a variety of church services, some acting as acolytes and others reading the Eucharist. Spiritual and moral provision is a key strength of the school.

At the last inspection, you were asked to ensure that the work set accurately met the needs of all pupils. You have had mixed success with tackling this. Work has been most successful in early years and key stage 2. Standards in key stage 1 show that more work is required to improve the outcomes for all pupils in English, particularly for boys. The trust has already secured a national leader to work alongside your new key stage 1 leader to provide support and challenge.

Parents' responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, including their written responses, were mainly positive. However, some parents did raise a particular concern. Leaders, including a parent governor, could identify why a minority of parents were not happy, and are addressing the issues.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding procedures are fully in place. All staff members receive regular training and updates, so they can recognise and respond to any concerns. Record keeping is up to date and incidents recorded correctly.

Pupils feel safe and know that they can seek help from an adult if they have any worries or concerns. Behaviour is good and on rare occasions when there are any incidents, details are kept on file. The curriculum supports work on keeping safe, and pupils learn about safer use of the internet and know how to keep themselves safe. Risk assessments are in place.

Inspection findings

- Children in the early years make good progress across all areas of the curriculum. Outcomes are continuing to improve and more children reach a good level of development than seen nationally. A higher proportion of boys reached the expected standard in 2017 because the early years leader reviewed and improved the provision. Most children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities typical for their age. Leaders have formed close links with a range of nursery settings. They use a wide range of information to form part of their assessment process. Assessment on entry is accurate and takes account of what children can do. Relationships are positive. Children are happy and well supported in their learning.
- The number of pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics is now broadly in line with national expectations. You have adapted your phonics planning and have a clear set of expectations. The leader in charge of phonics analysed the outcomes for 2017 and noted that the majority of pupils who did not meet the standard were summer-born (and therefore the youngest) boys in the class.
- Outcomes in mathematics in key stage 1 have improved because you have worked on developing key mathematical skills in key stage 1. Standards are now similar to those seen nationally. Standards in writing and reading are still below those seen nationally and governors and the trust have prioritised key stage 1 English as a key area for improvement. Boys' achievement is below that of girls. Your new key stage 1 leader is already working hard to ensure that a higher proportion of boys reach the expected standard.
- Standards in key stage 2 have been above those seen nationally for the last three years. Pupils have made similar rates of progress to other pupils nationally. This year, a much higher proportion of pupils met the expected standard in spelling, grammar and punctuation than in 2016 due to a more structured teaching approach. After the local authority moderated writing this year, there has been a decline in outcome figures. Leaders are now implementing the local authority assessment guidance. Teachers are using more modelling and are keeping detailed assessment information on the correct use of punctuation and grammar.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- new senior leaders create measurable action plans for their specific areas of responsibility, to enable governors to check the impact of their work

- standards improve in English in key stage 1, so that a higher proportion of pupils, particularly boys, reach and exceed the expected standard
- teachers assess writing work by following the local authority guidance and moderating with other schools in order to ensure greater consistency and improve standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Lunn
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, senior leaders, the chief executive and the chair of the trust and two governors. I examined documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, development plan, governing body minutes of meetings, progress information and safeguarding documentation. I spoke to pupils informally in the playground and listened to several pupils read. I visited every classroom with you, with the exception of Year 4 pupils, who were on an educational visit out of school. I considered the 54 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.