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Mrs Fran Martin  
Acting Headteacher  
St Andrew's Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Martin

### **Short inspection of St Andrew's Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 16 January 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 December 2012.

St Andrews continues to be a good school where everyone is valued, cared for and encouraged to succeed both academically and socially. Its fully inclusive ethos is a fitting tribute to the long-standing leadership of the late headteacher who worked closely with all members of the school community to ensure that every child in his care received the best possible education. His legacy, of which there is so much to be proud, has been very sensitively maintained by the acting headteacher, who, parents feel, has a 'good balance of leadership, discipline and charisma'. Since her appointment, she has been ably supported by a local leader of education (LLE), the governing body and all members of the school staff.

Leaders have remained strong and focused during this sad time and continue to put the children at the heart of all they do. This has been very much appreciated by the vast majority of parents. The online Ofsted inspection parent questionnaire reflects considerable praise for the way in which school leaders, including governors, and all members of staff have dealt with the very sudden bereavement of the 'much-loved' and highly respected headteacher. Comments made by parents, such as 'the school handled this extremely well...their professionalism should be commended', and 'the children have been given support to cope with their own feelings and process what has happened', exemplify many of the views submitted.

The school has continued to build on its effectiveness since the previous inspection. Leaders have ensured that all teachers follow the agreed marking policy, which is effective in helping pupils to improve their work. Regular checks on the quality of teaching confirm that all groups of pupils are fully involved in their learning. The school is justifiably proud of the progress that the pupils make in reading,

particularly the most able. This has been reflected over the past two years with pupils' progress in the top 20% of schools nationally.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team, including governors, has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. They are extremely sensitive to the differing demographics of the local community and the challenges that these bring. Effective safeguarding training, based around government guidelines, has been provided for all staff and governors. This is systematically and regularly updated. Leaders take effective steps to check that staff have understood and follow the key messages from the training and guidance given.

Staff are vigilant and report any concerns they have to the designated safeguarding leaders. They work tirelessly to ensure that pupils are, and feel, safe. The excellent relationships that pupils enjoy with all members of staff mean that they confidently share worries or concerns with them, which are then quickly resolved.

Staff work very closely with a wide range of other specialist agencies and professionals. They ensure that case files on pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are up to date. They keep clear and detailed records of interactions they have with vulnerable pupils and their families.

### **Inspection findings**

- To ascertain that the school remained good, we agreed to look together at: what was being done to match the progress of disadvantaged pupils in reading to that of other pupils nationally; how well leaders were accelerating pupils' progress in writing and mathematics, especially for the middle attainers; improving rates of attendance and the reduction of persistent absenteeism; keeping all groups of pupils safe and meeting their specific needs.
- Leaders ensure that the school continues to improve because they rigorously compare their published test outcomes with national trends. They quickly respond to any dips in progress by refining the extra support they provide for individuals or key groups of pupils. For example, weaknesses in the phonics skills of the 2016 Year 1 were quickly rectified by daily practice of letter sounds and blends. As a result, in their end of Year 2 reading tests in 2017, the overall attainment of this cohort was in the top 10% nationally. Nevertheless, leaders are not complacent and are now ensuring that the very small group of disadvantaged pupils in this year group whose progress was not as strong as their peers gets the additional help they need to improve their skills.
- Recently introduced systems which assess and record how well pupils are progressing are supporting class teachers to gain a more consistent understanding of how different groups of pupils are performing. The specific focus on accelerating pupils' progress in writing and mathematics, particularly the middle attainers, is being carefully tracked through these systems. These indicate that the additional activities and extra resources being used to scaffold the pupils' writing and the specific focus on problem-solving activities in mathematics are

having an effective impact in developing the pupils' confidence and extending their learning. These new assessments are being checked rigorously by leaders, who recognise there is still some way to go until they are fully embedded throughout the school.

- Leaders are very clear about the specific factors, including chronic and prolonged illness and fixed-term exclusions, which contributed to a dip in attendance rates and an increase in persistent absenteeism during the past academic year. New approaches to helping those pupils who find lunchtimes difficult to manage are steadily reducing incidents which disrupt the school day and previously led to fixed-term exclusions.
- The school is recognised as a beacon of excellence for the way in which it works so successfully with the families from the nearby Traveller community. This has been achieved through strong trusting leadership over time, the willingness to engage with the community, the positive response to their cultural differences and work with specialist agencies to support barriers to education. The way in which the school engages its Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils in regularly coming to school is of particular success. This is reflected in their attendance rates, which are well above the national average for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils.
- Some parents raised concerns about the small group of pupils who, at times, do have difficulty conforming to school routines. We both noted that when pupils are required to move around the school unattended, especially through the long corridor area, their behaviour is not always as it should be. However, during our visit, in and around the classrooms, we observed pupils behaving well and focusing fully on their learning. During the 'treehouse' sessions, where pupils from all classes meet in mixed-year groups to discuss school issues, it was clear that they respected and valued each other's views. In discussion with pupils, they explained that they were proud to attend St Andrews 'because teachers do so well to prepare us for life'. They were also quick to point out that only a few of their peers did not always behave as well as they should.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils move around the school sensibly, politely and safely when they are not accompanied by an adult
- they embed the new assessment procedures, so that the progress of key groups can be checked and tracked more robustly.

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

Yours sincerely

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Lorna Brackstone

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

Appointed as deputy headteacher for September 2017, and following the sudden and untimely passing away of the long-standing headteacher, you have taken on the role of acting headteacher for this academic year. You have been supported by an experienced headteacher from a local school, who is an LLE. Since the start of this term, in January 2017, you have been joined by an acting deputy headteacher for the remainder of the school year.

During this inspection, I met with you, the acting deputy headteacher and the LLE to discuss the school's effectiveness. I had discussions with middle leaders responsible for early years, English, mathematics and special educational needs. I also met with the traveller-support advisory teacher and a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. I held telephone conversations with a representative from the local authority and a school improvement consultant. I met with a group of pupils and talked informally with others around the school during lessons and at lunchtime. We toured the school and together observed the teaching and learning in all classes. I examined documents, including information about the safeguarding of pupils, the school's self-evaluation document, the improvement plan and information about pupils' achievement. I considered 66 responses to Parent View, including additional comments which were made by free text. I also reviewed a survey of parents' views and a staff questionnaire organised by leaders towards the end of last term.