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20 April 2018

Mrs Jacqueline Wightman
Headteacher
St Philip (Westbrook) CofE Aided Primary School
Westbrook Centre
Westbrook
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Cheshire
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Dear Mrs Wightman

Short inspection of St Philip (Westbrook) CofE Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 December 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

St Philip Westbrook is a happy school. The sentiment of the school motto, 'Together we aim high and with God's love we can fly', perfectly describes your collective expectations for pupils and your belief in what they can achieve.

The continuing success of the school is the result of your committed and self-assured leadership. You have a strong vision and high expectations for providing the very best for pupils. This is shared by your senior leadership team, governors and staff. Together, you have created a loving environment that promotes the care and nurture of the whole school community, enfolded by Christian values that are lived out day by day. Children are rightly proud of their school and feel the sense of belonging that has been created and is a strong feature of the school.

The very large majority of parents and carers who spoke to me, or responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, are very positive about the school and would recommend it to others. Most staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire are proud to be part of St Philip Westbrook and feel that the school is well led and managed. Staff share your aspirations and there is a strong sense of the staff working in collaboration for continual improvement.

During my visit, I looked at the progress the school had made since the previous inspection. There has been very good progress made. This demonstrates leaders' ability to improve the school further. Pupils are fully engaged in their learning and are all encouraged and confident to participate equally in their lessons. Teachers are effective in the way they ask just the right questions to support pupils' individual understanding and draw out their learning. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and clearly explain activities and their expectations. Pupils respond extremely well, noticeably enjoying their learning and the opportunities they have to try out and apply their skills. Your success in developing pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling throughout school is evident in your outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2017. Nearly all pupils attained the expected standard and over half of them at the higher standard. Pupils are well supported to develop their skills as writers. They are introduced to a range of writing and encouraged to write extended pieces within their English lessons and also across the curriculum.

Your pupils achieve well. The school is above national averages for the proportion of pupils that reach the expected standard in English and mathematics and overall the proportion of pupils that attain at the higher standard at both key stages 1 and 2. However, you want to achieve more for pupils. We agreed that there are some pupils who are not yet making the gains they could, particularly in reading and writing at greater depth and at the higher standards.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the staff team have ensured that pupils are safe and secure by promoting the clear message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Detailed safeguarding records are kept rigorously and regularly reviewed to ensure that they meet statutory requirements. Staff and governors undertake appropriate, frequent and up-to-date training. This includes training related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Your vigilance and that of the leadership team regarding the care, support and advocacy of vulnerable pupils is a strength. Leaders have effective relationships with external agencies and are instrumental in contributing to the safeguarding of vulnerable pupils.

Pupils say that they feel very safe and well cared for in the school. They feel confident that adults will help them if needed. Pupils of all ages talk with knowledge about the ways they can stay safe in a range of situations, including personally and online. The very large majority of parents feel that you and the staff keep children safe and well looked after.

Inspection findings

- One of the areas I explored with you was the work to ensure that as many pupils as possible achieve at greater depth and higher standards, particularly those pupils that have the potential to be challenged further in their learning. You have increased the expectations of what pupils can achieve and incorporated these into teachers' yearly professional targets. Through pupil progress meetings with

teachers and discussions with year group leaders, you are increasing teachers' focus on higher- and in particular middle-ability pupils. You are insisting on consistency in their teaching approach. Planning is regularly revisited to meet the learning needs of pupils on a day-to-day basis. Your thorough assessment systems have enabled you to track this group of pupils carefully. There are strong indications that your work is having a positive effect, particularly in mathematics. However, I agree with you that there is still more to do in reading and writing to ensure that all pupils are achieving all they are capable of.

- Another area I explored was how you support the small group of disadvantaged pupils to reach their full potential. Your vigilance in tracking their progress is a clear indication of your commitment to ensure that this group of pupils achieve well. You offer a range of effective support to help those who need it, to catch up quickly. For example, encouraging a reluctant group of boys to be excited about writing, or buddying pupils with a partner in school to ensure that they read to someone regularly. You and your staff team work sensitively to reduce any barriers to learning and address any well-being needs. To this end, you use the pupil premium funding you receive wisely.
- The work you do in subjects other than English and mathematics was another line of enquiry. Your curriculum is a real strength. It is led enthusiastically and confidently by your subject champions, who are passionate about their subjects. You have developed a well thought-out and comprehensive curriculum which provides lots of opportunities for real-life and 'wow' experiences. Pupils say that you have been successful in making learning enjoyable and exciting. For example, they say that 'teachers make our learning fun' and, 'We learn lots of cool things and find out about the world.' Where appropriate, there are regular opportunities for pupils to practise their English and mathematics skills across the curriculum. For example, in Year 6 science, pupils used their mathematical skills to plan an investigation about foot flexibility. In Year 2 geography, pupils were encouraged to write lists and label physical and man-made features in Australia. You have established an excellent system for assessing the progress of pupils in each subject. You identify pupils who are working at an expected standard for their age and those who are working at greater depth.
- A fourth line of enquiry was to explore why a small number of pupils were persistently absent from school. Attendance is a high priority for the school and absence is currently below the national average, as is overall persistent absence. You have thorough systems for monitoring attendance and keep a close eye on those pupils that are not attending school regularly. Your increased focus on these pupils has resulted in some notable successes, in particular a reduction in the number of pupils who are absent due to extended holidays in term time. As a result, the number of pupils persistently absent has decreased.
- Finally, we agreed to identify some of the other strengths of the school. Leadership and management continue to be outstanding. You have an accurate, reflective and very honest view of the school's strengths and priorities. You are ably assisted by an experienced deputy headteacher and knowledgeable senior leadership team. The nurturing approach you have adopted to encourage the professional development of staff has meant that not only do they share your high expectations, but they are also encouraged to grow and make a valuable

contribution to the improvement journey of the school. The governing body is passionate about its responsibilities and ensuring that pupils have the best possible start in life. They are supportive, challenge you appropriately and also make an important contribution towards the strong practice that is evident in the school. Consequently, there is a very good capacity to consolidate the strengths you already demonstrate and continue to improve the school further.

- Another strength is the pastoral support for pupils. Adults know pupils extremely well and are very attentive to their emotional well-being. Your Christian values are integral to this and are the guiding principles by which you support and develop the growth of emotional and personal development. Values such as 'Respect, trust, compassion, fellowship and fairness' are evident throughout the school. In lessons and around school, adults and children take every opportunity to reinforce their school values and give them an everyday meaning. For example, pupils are encouraged to persevere when faced with a challenge. Pupils talked with conviction about the importance of friendship, compassion and kindness.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should continue to ensure that:

- all pupils who have the potential to attain at higher standards achieve all that they are capable of, particularly in reading and writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Eastwood
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers. I also met with a small group of subject champions and the person responsible for maintaining safeguarding records. I met with eight governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke on the telephone to a representative of Warrington local authority. We visited lessons and I scrutinised pupils' work. I took account of the 134 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views of seven parents who talked with me before the school day. I took account of the 37 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and spoke with staff during the day. I also met with a group of pupils. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. I looked at school documents, including: information about pupils' achievement; the school's self-

evaluation; the school improvement plan; information related to the work of your governing body and documents relating to safeguarding.