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20 April 2018

Mrs Gaynor Stubbs  
Headteacher  
Armitage Church of England Primary School  
Rostron Avenue  
Ardwick  
Manchester  
M12 5NP

Dear Mrs Stubbs

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

Following my visit to the school on 27 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 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Since the previous inspection, you have improved the quality of pupils' writing considerably. Evidence shows that pupils in each year group write successfully. Pupils are motivated and enthusiastic writers who make rapid progress in their skills. Senior and middle leaders are clear about how to raise standards in pupils' writing even further.

Parents and carers told me that this is a school that cares about pupils and their families. Parents and pupils said that staff and leaders listen and respond to their views. Parents are very happy with their children's learning, including the quality of extra-curricular activities and trips. It is little wonder that the number of pupils attending the school has grown significantly in recent years.

Throughout the school, pupils behave very positively. During the inspection, it was a joy to see the pupils' eco-team unintentionally disrupt a meeting of adults. Pupils were so keen to complete their tasks to check that computers and lights were switched off. This is because pupils want to improve their school. They take their responsibilities as citizens seriously.



Leaders and governors intentionally consider how they can give a helping hand to the way that staff feel about their work at Armitage. Staff morale is high. They value the support and advice from colleagues and leaders that assist them to fine-tune their work. You enable staff to have frequent debates about teaching and learning, not only with one another, but with outside experts, including those from universities.

You set a high standard for the work of staff. The impact shows in many ways, for example in the very professional greeting from office staff at the school reception desk and, equally, in the clarity and accuracy of middle and senior leaders' understanding of the work of the school. Staff's displays of pupils' work in classrooms and corridors celebrate this work attractively. An example of this is the display of work on the importance of the Suffragette movement in establishing women's right to vote.

Pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have made science and the wider curriculum priorities for improvement. This is not because these subjects are weak but because leaders want to see the school excel even more.

At the previous inspection, inspectors recommended that leaders continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning. You have achieved this while appointing several new teachers to the staff team. Most teaching is skilful, engaging and challenging. Staff use their detailed knowledge of subjects and of teaching to good effect to make much of pupils' learning engaging and rewarding. Nonetheless, we agreed that some art activities in the early years do not challenge children enough. We also agreed that some pupils in Year 1 need greater support from staff during their play activities.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders ensure that the curriculum gives pupils many opportunities to learn about keeping themselves safe. Staff display clear messages about safeguarding in pupil-friendly ways throughout the school. Parents and pupils know how to raise issues with staff and leaders. Pupils feel safe at school. They said that staff respond effectively to any reports of bullying.

Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the challenges to safety and well-being that some local pupils and families experience. Leaders train staff fully to recognise and respond to local risks to pupils. You make sure that several staff who have completed high-level training in safeguarding are available throughout the year to attend multi-agency meetings or to deal with concerns from colleagues. Governors' understanding of safeguarding is growing quickly because leaders give them guidance and training matched to their needs. Staff and leaders record concerns about pupils' care and protection carefully. Leaders review information meticulously. They make timely and proper referrals to other agencies.



## Inspection findings

- Senior and middle leaders have a clear and informed understanding of the strengths and priorities for improvement in the school. Their reviews of the work of staff are honest and well thought out. Leaders use information about pupils' progress and attainment expertly to ask challenging questions of themselves and staff. The subject leader for English is passionate and knowledgeable. She uses her expertise ably to support colleagues in improving their teaching of writing. Leaders check in detail the quality of pupils' writing in each year group. They review this information carefully against national expectations and the school curriculum, to pinpoint areas for improvement.
- Pupils make strong progress in their writing throughout their time at the school. Current pupils, including boys, write purposefully. Their work shows that they make huge strides in their use of grammar, punctuation and spelling, their skills in presentation and their use of interesting and varied language. I saw clear evidence that pupils enjoy writing, want to write and know what makes writing effective. Leaders and staff make extensive use of a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books to inspire pupils and to develop their language. This gives much support to pupils' writing. For example, a boy whose earlier work was not so rich in language wrote in character, 'I feel sorrowful and downhearted.' Staff's planned activities to teach pupils to write in key stages 1 and 2 are highly engaging and enjoyable. For example, during the inspection, pupils were learning to edit their work. They scrutinised one another's efforts in a timed task, writing as if they were a burglar. Staff in the early years give children valuable opportunities to write, for example about scary sea monsters.
- Leaders' information shows that much teaching across classes is first rate and helps pupils to triumph over difficulties. This is because of the precise way that leaders develop staff's knowledge of different subjects and their teaching skills. Leaders use the insights of experts from outside the school to check the accuracy of their reviews of pupils' learning. During the inspection, I was struck by the passion and deep enthusiasm of staff for teaching. They love their jobs and want to refine the quality of their work as much as they can. Pupils, including the most able, engage confidently in the tasks set by teachers. Staff use challenging questions and appropriate technical language to aid pupils' learning. However, in some play activities in Year 1, staff do not give pupils enough support to maximise their progress.
- In the early years, staff boost children's language skills through lots of opportunities to talk. They support children competently in creating pretend worlds with toys and acting in adult roles. Children learn to coordinate their physical abilities with confidence, through a wide range of activities outdoors. In adult-led phonics activities, children are taught to recognise the sounds that letters make. However, some art activities do not develop children's creativity well.



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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- art activities in the early years better develop children's creativity
- staff in Year 1 support and extend pupils' learning more during their play-based activities.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Vaughan  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and senior leaders to consider your evaluation of the school and your plans for further improvement. We met with the school inclusion manager to discuss arrangements for safeguarding pupils. You and I visited classes to observe pupils' activities and talk with them about their learning. I met with the leaders for lower key stage 2 and for English to review evidence of pupils' writing in their books. I met with three governors and separately with the chair of governors. I met with a representative of the local authority. I spoke by telephone to an external adviser whom you employ to challenge and support leaders regularly. I spoke informally with parents at the start of the school day. I met with three representatives of the parent council. I considered the views of 24 parents shared through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I reviewed the views of seven pupils and 21 staff given in response to Ofsted's surveys. I looked at a range of school documentation, including reviews of pupils' progress and attainment. I checked the single central record of employment checks on staff, governors and volunteers. I reviewed examples of leaders' records about safeguarding.

School report



# Dean Trust Ardwick

345 Stockport Road, Ardwick, Manchester, Lancashire M13 0LF

**Inspection dates**

23–24 May 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Ambitious, committed leadership is a strength of the school. Leaders have created an inclusive culture within which pupils and staff feel valued and proud to belong.
- The Dean Trust, governors and senior leaders are determined to serve the local community, and to develop an exemplary school, based on their vision 'believe, achieve, succeed'.
- Outcomes for pupils are good. Most groups of pupils make sustained progress as they move through the school. Disadvantaged pupils, those who speak English an additional language and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, make equally strong progress.
- The most able pupils are challenged to succeed at the highest levels. They make particularly strong progress in English and mathematics. A high proportion of pupils have chosen to follow demanding English Baccalaureate courses at key stage 4.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Learning is well structured, with an emphasis on developing mastery and deepening understanding across all subjects.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are outstanding. The school develops self-esteem, self-confidence, resilience and character through its 'passport to excellence' programme. Pupils know how to keep safe.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils of all abilities. It broadens horizons and raises aspirations. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is prominently promoted, along with a consistent focus on developing literary and communication skills.
- Pupils generally behave well around the school and have positive attitudes to learning in lessons. The vast majority enjoy school. Attendance is well above the national average.
- Governance is outstanding. Governors are very well qualified to evaluate the work of the school. They provide strong support for school leaders, but also challenge them to achieve even more.
- There is very occasional low-level disruption in lessons, sometimes when staff do not consistently follow the school's behaviour management policy.
- Teaching is consistently strong because of the focus on consolidating learning. However, sometimes this limits opportunities for teachers to inspire their pupils.
- Guidance about future careers and options post-16 is limited due to the school's early stage of development.



## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve teaching and learning, by:
  - ensuring that all staff consistently follow the new behaviour management policy in order to eliminate low-level disruption
  - supporting staff's confidence to develop more flexible and responsive approaches to learning.
- Develop and enhance provision for careers information and guidance, including post-16 options.



## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The school is exceptionally well led by the headteacher and senior leadership team. They have high expectations and are relentless in their pursuit of excellence. They have worked very hard since the school opened to raise achievement and develop a positive, vibrant school ethos. They are very well supported by all staff.
- The leadership of teaching is uncompromising and focused on providing support and improving practice across the school. Regular checks on teaching, supported by targeted training, have led to an increase in the proportion of high-quality teaching.
- Middle leaders are highly effective in managing their faculties and in contributing to pupils making at least good progress. All staff understand and use the progress data published every term to challenge any underperformance.
- Performance management of staff is closely linked to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. There is strong support for staff who need help. Staff morale is very high. Staff feel challenged but also strongly supported and consulted. For example, all staff have contributed to the new marking and assessment policy.
- Pastoral leaders monitor closely the emotional and social progress of pupils, as well as their academic work. Recently, in response to growing numbers of pupils, senior leaders have improved and developed the rewards, sanctions and behaviour management policy to make it more effective. Leaders are proactive in addressing matters before they become problematic.
- Leadership of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is highly effective. As a result, these pupils make equally good progress from their starting points as other pupils.
- The range of courses offered is wide and well-suited to the needs of different ability pupils, from highly academic to practical and vocational pathways. Leaders have built revisiting, resilience and flexibility into the curriculum. A key aim is to broaden horizons and raise aspirations. Visits, such as those to the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Whitworth gallery, have become a regular part of the school calendar.
- Pupils have many opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as serving on the school council, becoming librarians and helping with charity fundraising. Careers information and guidance is well-organised but is still at an early stage of development. Pupils are encouraged to gain experience and extra qualifications through the 'passport to excellence' strategy.
- The school's approach to personal development is exemplary. Strong emphasis is put on promoting British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has a very diverse population. Respect is fostered by setting high expectations for pupils' manners, speech, uniform and attendance.
- The school makes sure that all pupils have equality of access and equal opportunities. It uses additional funding to provide extra teaching and support for disadvantaged pupils and for pupils in Year 7 who enter the school attaining below average standards in English and mathematics, and to make sure that all pupils have equal access to



uniform, clubs and educational trips. These pupils make the same good progress as others in school. Leaders monitor closely their progress and achievements.

- The school is developing excellent links with parents and carers, some of whom regularly come into school for coffee mornings to learn more about the school's work and to ask questions. The school provides regular workshops for parents to understand more about the curriculum and how to support their children's education.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance is outstanding.
- Governors bring a wealth of experience from industry, education, commerce and the law, which they use very effectively to challenge leaders to maintain and improve the at least good quality teaching and standard of education.
- Governors know the school well through personal visits and reviewing of data on progress. They set high expectations for pupils and staff. They monitor the progress pupils are making and seek external validation for the school's work from other trust schools and consultants.
- Governors are very well informed through the wide range of training they have received. They visit the school regularly to undertake learning walks and to talk to staff and pupils. The governing body is rightly proud of the fact that in three years, this new school has become a first choice for local parents and primary schools, and is over-subscribed.
- The Dean Trust has provided excellent support for this new school. Across the nine schools, the trust shares good practice, staff training and mutual support. The trust is developing innovative ways to develop their school leaders. For example, in January the different headteachers exchanged schools for a week. This proved to be hugely successful in broadening horizons, generating new ideas and strengthening leadership at many levels.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is the concern of everyone who works in the school. Training is up to date and extensive. Staff know how to ensure that pupils are safe and how to respond if they have concerns. Senior leaders, governors and the trust ensure that all statutory child protection policies and procedures are in place, and regularly revisited to keep abreast of national changes. School leaders engage with parents and other members of the community to make sure pupils are supported and safe.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Leaders have ensured that there is a consistency of approach in lessons. Classroom routines are embedded and effective in promoting a prompt start to learning. Time is used productively, with orderly starts as pupils instantly settle to 'do it now' tasks.
- Positive relationships between pupils and staff reflect the mutual respect which exists





across the school. Teachers are interested in pupils' views and often use their comments as a starting point for learning. This means that activities are based on pupils' personal knowledge.

- Effective questioning helps pupils to form and express their views, consolidate understanding and to be precise in their answers. All pupils know that they must phrase their comments carefully and accurately. This helps to build self-confidence and improve communication skills.
- Teachers ensure that there is challenge for the most able in most lessons. They often give pupils tasks that promote their deeper thinking. For example, in mathematics Year 8 pupils derived their own formula for the area of a sector. They aptly used their prior learning and did not give up when their first attempts were inaccurate.
- Staff in all faculties put a very strong focus on reading and supporting literacy development. The school has a 'literacy-for-life' strategy. All subjects set the same high standards for both written work and pupils' communication skills. Teachers systematically promote reading for pleasure. The library is well stocked and frequently used. Partly because of this emphasis, pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in all subjects.
- Regular scheduled development lessons give pupils time to improve, review and refine their work. Teachers place strong emphasis on pupils knowing what good answers look like. Pupils assess accurately their own work and that of their peers.
- Leaders and staff have developed a new whole-school marking policy which is intelligent and rational and has been very well received by staff. It is still not fully embedded, but the early signs are positive that it will effectively promote learning.
- In a small number of lessons, teachers do not apply effectively the school's behaviour management policy in response to occasional low-level disruption from a very small minority of pupils. This can hinder learning.
- Teaching is clear and knowledgeable but sometimes lacks inspiration. This means that sometimes pupils' progress is not as rapid as it might be.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

#### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school is a highly inclusive community. Pupils recognise that their school is a culturally diverse community, with pupils from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. They say that everyone gets on well with each other and that pupils are accepting of each other's differences, be they religious, ethnic, cultural or sexual preferences. Of the 242 pupils who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, over 90% said that the school encouraged them to respect other backgrounds. Pupils know and explain fundamental British values.
- The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy school. They value their education. They are respectful of teachers, are articulate, and discuss and answer questions thoughtfully in standard English.



- Pupils of all ages can explain the teaching they have had on how to keep safe in different situations. They have access to programmes on topics, such as knife crime, gang culture, mental health, keeping safe online and keeping safe travelling to and from school.
- Pupils report there is little bullying. They know what to do if they witness bullying or experience it themselves.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities, such as serving on the school council, becoming librarians, speaking in debates and working on transition with feeder primary schools. Pupils value the rewards they can earn through the merit system. A high proportion of pupils in Year 9 are taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. All pupils work to complete a 'passport to excellence', which celebrates and records academic, social and community achievements. Pupils genuinely live up the motto 'proud to belong'.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils move around the school with purpose, keen to get to lessons on time. In just a few instances, boisterous behaviour on corridors means some pupils arrive to lessons less ready to focus on learning.
- A small minority of pupils occasionally disrupt the learning of others. This is usually, but not always, dealt with effectively by teachers using the new 'chance, choice, consequences' policy. Internal suspensions are used as a last resort if behaviour is unacceptable. Repeat offenders are dealt with by the pastoral team. Case studies show the behaviour and attitude to learning of these individuals has improved over time.
- Attendance has been consistently above the national average since the school opened. It is now high.
- The safety, progress, attendance and behaviour of the few pupils who attend alternative provision are monitored closely by school leaders. These pupils make good progress.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- As yet, the school has no GCSE results to compare with all schools nationally.
- The school establishes a baseline from outcomes at primary schools and other tests when pupils enter Year 7. From these, leaders set challenging and ambitious targets.
- A high proportion of pupils in all three year groups are currently on track to achieve their targets. The school compares their progress data with all schools nationally, and this shows that pupils are making strong progress across all subjects. This is supported by a scrutiny of the work in pupils' books.
- Disadvantaged pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are achieving the same rate of good progress as other pupils nationally. This is because of the tailored support they receive.
- Catch-up funding is used effectively for Year 7 pupils who are not yet fully prepared for the secondary curriculum. School information shows there is a good improvement for



these pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The most able pupils are making very good progress because most teachers provide the necessary challenge to stretch their understanding and make them think. Pupils can eloquently articulate their learning.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported by their subject teachers and teaching assistants. Their overall progress is overseen by the coordinator for the provision for those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, who ensures they receive specific, targeted support. Currently the great majority of these pupils are set to achieve their end-of-year targets in Years 7, 8 and 9, indicating good progress.
- The whole-school focus on promoting literacy contributes significantly to pupils who speak English as an additional language making very good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils in Year 9 have received useful guidance before making their option choices for GCSE subjects. However, many pupils feel that they need much more information about future careers and what opportunities there are beyond Year 11.
- The focus on promoting pupils' personal development and resilience, alongside their academic work, prepares them well to become useful and productive citizens, and stands them in good stead for their future education, training or employment.



## School details

Unique reference number	141884
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10046081

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	650
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neill Harris
Headteacher	Suzanne Finlay
Telephone number	0161 9722988
Website	<a href="http://deantrustardwick.co.uk">deantrustardwick.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiries@thedeantrust.co.uk">enquiries@thedeantrust.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school opened in 2015 and currently has three year groups on roll in Years 7, 8 and 9. It is one of a group of five secondary schools and four primary schools in the Dean Trust, which is a multi-academy trust.
- The school has a higher proportion of boys than most schools.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very high. Forty-four different languages are spoken by pupils in school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is high and includes more than half of all pupils.
- A very small proportion of pupils are educated off-site in alternative provision. The school uses the Manchester Secondary Pupil Referral Unit.
- The government's current floor standards have yet to apply to this school.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across a range of subjects and in different year groups. They scrutinised work to evaluate pupils' progress over time. They spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences, work and progress, in formal meetings and informally at lunch and breaktimes. They observed assembly and tutor times at the start of the school day.
- They met with senior leaders, the chief executive of the Dean Trust, the chair of the governing body and other governors, middle leaders and pastoral leaders. Meetings were also held with teachers and those responsible for safeguarding and the provision for those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors evaluated the school's assessments, its information about the progress of pupils currently in the school, development plans and school self-evaluation. Records about behaviour, sanctions and attendance were also scrutinised.
- Sixty responses to the online staff questionnaire, 246 responses to the online pupil questionnaire and the 56 responses to Parent View were also considered.

## Inspection team

Judith Straw, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Roberts	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Veitch	Ofsted Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector



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