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Mr Clive Wilson
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Wilson

Short inspection of Christ Church Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 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 the school was judged to be good in March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, your leadership team and the governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that need development. Plans to improve the school focus sharply on the areas that will most benefit pupils and you have ensured that all staff are empowered to make a significant contribution to school improvement.

Children start school in the Nursery and Reception classes with skills that are below those typical for their age, especially in the areas of language and communication. Teaching is well focused on sensory activities and personal, social and emotional development to prepare all the children, especially the multilingual children, well for the next stage of their learning. The work in pupils' books indicates that they are making good progress as a result of good teaching throughout key stages 1 and 2. You and your leaders are very aware that the standards in the national assessments at key stage 1 last year were about the same as the previous year. You have worked hard to ensure that standards in key stage 1 rise, which is now beginning to have an impact. Attainment at the end of key stage 2 was in line with national averages in 2016.

Although pupils make good progress, you agree that more can be done to challenge some of the most able, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, in their mathematics work. You are focused on continual improvement and you have also identified the need to improve the phonics skills of pupils, and boys' writing

throughout the school. This is not only to increase the proportions of pupils passing the Year 1 phonics screening check, which is presently in line with the national average, but also to secure a better awareness of strategies for writing by the end of key stage 2.

You provide effective professional development for recently appointed middle leaders and have strengthened senior leadership. For example, a system of 'shadow leadership' is developing middle leaders effectively. However, you recognise that the further development of middle leaders remains a priority. You are aware that sustained improvements to teaching depend on how well you develop the skills of middle leaders. You have secured improvements to the teaching of mathematics and reading. However, it is apparent that some teachers do not routinely identify when pupils are ready to move on to more challenging work, particularly in mathematics.

Parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and pupils who spoke with me overwhelmingly agreed that the school is welcoming and inclusive. You focus strongly on pupils' well-being as well as their learning. Pupils enjoy school and most pupils learn well. Some pupils make exceptionally good progress. Pupils said this is a welcoming and friendly school. They talked about the values of 'faith, achievement, teamwork, fairness, and kindness' by proudly showing me where they were displayed in the school. They value the support that teachers provide and the choice of activities and clubs available to help them develop other interests.

New governors joined the board during the last two years and a new chair of governors was appointed 18 months ago. Governors have devised rigorous systems to check on all aspects of the school's work and to improve their own effectiveness. They are thus very well informed; they hold leaders to account, ask astute questions and ensure that all statutory requirements are in place. Consequently, they are making a strong contribution in driving continuous improvement.

An area for improvement identified in the previous inspection report was to improve teaching by making sure that teachers make clear what pupils need to do to improve their work to achieve higher standards. It also asked that teachers regularly provide challenging activities especially for the most able pupils. When we visited classes together, and when I checked pupils' books and talked with pupils, it was clear that pupils know what they are learning and how well they are progressing. You have introduced changes to the curriculum which ensure that pupils, especially the most able, are challenged and motivated to do their best. This has created a shared language of learning and expectations among all staff that 'they can because we think they can' and has developed a collective approach to learning which motivates pupils. The discussion with the pupils also told me that teachers and support staff are clearly putting this strategy into practice. As one pupil put it, 'Work is challenging depending on the group you are in but teachers make sure you get it by the end of the lesson.'

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leadership team ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are met and they are fit for purpose. Staff and governors have completed all relevant training. Recruiting and vetting procedures are thorough and records are systematically maintained. The safeguarding of all pupils is paramount to staff and is an integral part of school life. For example, you regularly check and discuss any safeguarding issues and highlight those pupils who might require extra support. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. They say that they can turn to any adult for help, and particularly their teacher. They also say that adults listen to them and make them 'feel comfortable again'. Pupils are very clear about how to keep safe when using the internet. They also know how to deal with what they describe as 'nasty texts' and other unsuitable materials.

We discussed the level of support you provide for pupils who find it difficult to learn to manage their own behaviour or to conform to school routines. I found that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds get on well together. Their understanding of British values, and the help and support they give each other in and out of lessons impressed me.

Inspection findings

- You explained that the school had analysed closely the 2016 national test results for pupils in Year 6, particularly the progress of boys in writing, which was below that of girls. My first line of enquiry was to explore how you had responded to this outcome. You provided evidence to show that the apparent issue with boys was specific to that year group, and not ongoing. You acted quickly to address these issues through, for example, introducing a new approach to writing and increasing skills to develop reading. You also provided training for teachers and teaching assistants to raise their confidence in teaching the new approaches. Pupils understand the criteria that they need to ensure that their work is successful.
- On the classroom visits, pupils told me about the mantra 'WAGOLLS' (What A Good One Looks Like), and they clearly understood what this demonstrated. They explained that there are times when they mark each other's work and make comments on what could be better. The impact of this is that pupils feel more involved in their learning and staff have a greater focus on pupils' needs. Your special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is proactive in ensuring that specific interventions are monitored closely to show the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Work in pupils' books shows the positive impact of these interventions, especially in the quality of writing in other subjects as well as in English. Standards in boys' writing have risen. Assessment information shows that pupils are on track to achieve better outcomes than last year, although we agree that all pupils need greater consistency in the level of challenge to reach the higher standards.
- Standards at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics were below national averages in 2016 both at the expected attainment levels and the number of pupils attaining the higher levels. This was particularly so for girls and

lower-ability pupils. This was the second focus for the inspection. Your analysis of the data shows that this was another specific cohort issue that affects your school with its high rates of mobility. This particular year group had a high percentage of pupils, especially girls, who have specific language and/or learning needs. These pupils currently in Year 3 are receiving intensive phonics support to increase fluency, spelling, vocabulary and comprehension.

- Leaders have a good understanding of the quality of pupils' work. You use a variety of strategies to support pupils to enable them to attain and progress well, including academic as well as social and emotional support. Appropriately trained members of staff and volunteers provide a wide range of interventions for pupils. These are implemented when pupils' progress suggests that they are needed. Rigorous monitoring and leaders' analysis of current pupils' attainment, including more effective monitoring of the progress of lower-attaining pupils, suggest that these improvements in standards in key stage 1 will continue.
- Given the number of vulnerable pupils in your school, we agreed another line of enquiry was to see how these pupils are supported. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities currently at the school make strong progress as a result of consistently good teaching that meets their needs. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) provides effective support to teachers to help them plan work that is well tailored to pupils' individual learning needs. In addition, teaching assistants provide a wide range of well-targeted interventions to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The SENCo is rigorous in checking that these interventions have the desired impact, and will change them if they do not. Skilful teaching from classroom teachers and assistants helps these pupils, particularly those in the early stages of developing reading and writing skills, make good progress from their starting points. Parents praised your SENCo for ensuring the smooth transition of this group of pupils, both when they join the school and as they move on to secondary school.
- My last enquiry was to do with safeguarding, including examining what you were doing to tackle the poor attendance of some pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. I found that you keep a close eye on those pupils who do not attend school regularly or who arrive late. You have effective systems for making sure that parents notify you of the reasons for absences and parents respond well. You also analyse attendance data carefully to check for any periods or patterns of absence that might give cause for concerns about safeguarding. In 2015/16, the absences noted were the result of personal family situations and poor health or medical issues, some of which required hospitalisation. As a result of the work you have done, the current attendance rates show improvement on last year.
- You have, rightly, decided to make the further development of middle leaders' skills a priority. You and the governors recognise the need to build capacity to sustain the improvements you have made since your appointment. Middle leaders I spoke to during the inspection could explain their impact on priorities for improvement in their areas of responsibility. They supported their views with evidence, which convinced me that they know about outcomes for pupils in depth. However, we all agreed that there is scope for further development of

their skills so that they add even greater impact to pupils' education. This includes leaders who have recently been appointed to their roles.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers continue to use the new curriculum approach to ensure a consistent level of challenge for all pupils to reach the higher standards
- the school's succession planning continues the development of subject leaders so that they have greater effect on curriculum development and standards.

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

Terry Mortimer
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your assistant headteachers and other staff members. The inspection also involved a meeting with the chair of governors, and two other governors including the governor with safeguarding responsibilities, as well as speaking with a representative of the local authority. There were 24 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. We visited all the classrooms together, to observe pupils' learning and talk to them about it. Work by pupils from a range of abilities was looked at in mathematics and English and in topics. I listened to a range of pupils reading. I also examined a wide range of documentation and information relating to your self-evaluation, school improvement planning, equalities, assessment, monitoring and evaluation, and safeguarding.