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28 April 2017

Mrs Andrea Noake
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Dear Mrs Noake

Short inspection of Chislet Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 April 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have successfully created a climate of continual improvement. Governors and staff are highly ambitious for the achievement and well-being of every child. As a result, there is a real 'buzz' about learning in the school. You also ensure that pupils behave well at all times, that they are considerate to each other and that they wear their uniforms with pride. With your increasingly effective subject leaders, you acted quickly to reverse a dip in outcomes in reading in 2015. Similarly, you have taken effective action to address the underperformance of middle prior-attaining pupils in mathematics in 2016. You made carefully researched changes to the mathematics curriculum, introducing a sharper focus on both basic skills and problem-solving. As a result, current assessment information shows that pupils are now making strong progress from their starting points in mathematics in all year groups.

Parents recognise and appreciate all that the school does for their children. The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were highly complimentary about the quality of teaching. They also noted teachers' support for their children's social and emotional development. Many commented favourably on the caring, family atmosphere of this small school. One wrote, 'We are privileged that our child attends such a special place where their academic and emotional needs are met with such care and attention.'

At the last inspection, the lead inspector identified many strengths in the school, including the quality of teaching and leadership, the caring climate and the good progress made by pupils. You have successfully maintained and built on these strengths. At the same time, the lead inspector recommended that leaders take steps to improve further the quality of teaching and of pupils' writing. You have taken effective action to address both of these recommendations. However, you, your governing body and leadership team are ambitious to provide an outstanding education for your pupils, and so have set challenging targets for further improvement. As a result, you have rightly identified rates of attendance, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, as a priority. In addition, you aim to increase the proportion of pupils who achieve high scores in national tests in reading and writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils' safety and well-being lie at the heart of all that the school does and there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. For example, all staff meetings have a standing item on safeguarding. Rigorous checks are carried out on all who work or volunteer in the school. In addition, staff and governors receive appropriate and routinely updated training in keeping pupils safe, including from extremism. Staff know every pupil in the school and are ever-vigilant. The three designated safeguarding leaders undertake regular training, and are diligent in ensuring that vulnerable pupils receive the support they need from outside agencies.

You and your staff have developed a particular expertise in meeting the medical, social and emotional needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Parents recognise this, with one telling me at the start of the day that she couldn't be happier with the provision in place for her child and that nothing was too much trouble for the school.

Pupils say they feel safe and know how to keep safe, be that in crossing the road or in using the internet. Pupils also say that bullying is very rare, and that when it does happen, teachers deal with it promptly and effectively. Pupils concentrate on their learning in class and play well together in the playground. Older pupils look out for younger ones and they know to include anyone in their games who is on their own.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look in particular at the following aspects of the school's work:
 - the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements
 - how well leaders have addressed the recommendation in the previous inspection report to improve further the quality of teaching
 - how well disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able are doing in English and mathematics
 - how well the curriculum meets pupils' needs and prepares them for their next steps
 - the impact of leaders' actions to improve attendance

- how effectively governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities.
- You have ensured that teaching continues to improve because you encourage staff to reflect on their practice and you give them good opportunities to develop. Teachers benefit from regular training, and are held to account stringently for their pupils' outcomes. You have rightly invested in the development of your subject leaders who lead their areas of responsibility with vision and energy. They provide teachers with high-quality support and challenge. As a result, teachers' subject knowledge and use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding have improved. Teachers know their pupils well and give them work to do which is closely matched to their needs. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively. Staff morale is high. One teacher who responded to the staff survey wrote, 'I feel proud to work as part of our very close team and feel my opinions and experiences are valued by senior leaders.'
- You check current pupils' progress systematically and ensure that pupils receive the additional support they need. You evaluate the impact of this support carefully. As a result, all pupils in all year groups are making good progress from their various starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are doing particularly well, as a result of the well-focused support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. However, you and your leadership team are keen to ensure that a greater proportion of pupils achieve high scores in national tests in reading and writing. You are taking effective action to address this by increasing the level of challenge in reading comprehension work and by focusing on pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation in all year groups.
- Since the previous inspection, you have revised the curriculum so that it provides greater levels of challenge and better captures pupils' interest. For example, a structured and practical approach to science education enables pupils to think and write scientifically. Pupils also enjoy outdoor learning sessions, which complement their learning in a number of subjects and also provide a rich context for writing. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about their learning, relishing the challenge their mathematics lessons provide and the encouragement their teachers give them to read widely. The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. One pupil told me that, 'In religious education, we learn to respect other people's beliefs.' Outcomes in the early years foundation stage, in phonics and in key stage 1 are strong, while progress in key stage 2 is in line with national averages. These outcomes demonstrate that the more challenging curriculum has raised expectations successfully and that it prepares pupils well for their next steps in education.
- You recognise that rates of attendance since September, in particular for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, remain below national averages. You recently employed a family liaison officer who has begun to provide additional challenge and support to the families of pupils who are most frequently absent. In recent weeks, attendance figures have improved and you expect them to reach national averages by the end of the year.
- Governors are committed to the school and are diligent in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities, including for safeguarding. There is evidence that their challenge

has led to improvement. For example, during a book scrutiny exercise they commented on the variable quality of handwriting, which led to concerted action by teachers and leaders to improve presentation. Governors recognise that elements of the website are either not compliant or do not reflect as well as they could the good work of the school. They already have plans in place to address this.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- rates of attendance, in particular for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, match or exceed national averages
- more pupils are able to achieve high scores in reading and writing as a result of teachers' continued focus on reading comprehension and writing skills.

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

Yours sincerely

Gary Holden
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, you and I carried out visits to all classes. I also held meetings with you and with members of your leadership team to discuss pupils' progress, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. I met with the chair of the governing body and three other members of the governing body and spoke on the telephone with the local authority improvement officer. I reviewed a wide range of documentation that you made available to me, including your self-evaluation form and school improvement plan. I also reviewed the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding. I spoke with a group of pupils and reviewed a sample of their work. I took account of 38 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 35 free-text responses. I also considered 12 responses to the staff survey and 33 responses to the pupil survey.