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Mr Luke Coles
Headteacher
Harnham Church of England Controlled Junior School
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Dear Mr Coles

Short inspection of Harnham Church of England Controlled Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 15 June 2016, 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 July 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your school is a joyful place where pupils walk in sensibly from the playground eager to participate in the interesting activities that await them. A calm, organised and purposeful atmosphere exists. Parents, staff and pupils all used the word 'caring' to describe the nurturing, friendly atmosphere at Harnham. Pupils told me that regardless of differences in their age, they work and play well together in a supportive, welcoming environment.

Your clear focus on developing a responsible community in a secure environment is evident from first entering the school. Pupils greeted me politely, confident and at ease in their role of hosting visitors to the school. Adults teach them to respect each other and play their part as responsible members of the wider school community. Your 'community' and 'whole child' values are at the heart of your approach and underpin everyone's attitude to learning. Values such as democracy and tolerance are strongly promoted and taken very seriously. Pupils and adults understand that such qualities will enable everyone to become responsible citizens of the future and be ready for secondary school.

Alongside your strong commitment to developing pupils' personal qualities sits an equally determined ambition that pupils will also do as well academically. You check the progress pupils are making regularly on an individual basis. It is clear that you

have tackled the two issues from the previous inspection robustly. Pupils' books show that boys' writing has improved in line with that of girls. The most able pupils are now being effectively challenged, for example to use advanced mathematical skills when solving complex real-life problems to plan a summer holiday.

When pupils leave in Year 6, they do so with a good foundation in reading, mathematics and writing. Historically, attainment has been above average in these areas. You, your staff and governors have worked hard to improve pupils' performance after a dip in 2015 and this is proving effective. Pupils' current attainment in all subjects is on track to be back to the historically high levels. Disadvantaged pupils, though very small in number, achieve very well. Their attainment compares favourably with pupils from non-disadvantaged backgrounds.

Safeguarding is effective.

During my visit, I questioned staff with different roles and experience to explain the school's procedures for safeguarding pupils. I checked to see if they knew what to do should they be concerned about a child's safety. Without exception, the procedures were well known, showing that your training has been correctly focused and had the desired impact.

My focus for safeguarding was important because the school's written policy was not initially available on the school website. It is now, and reflects the latest guidance. In addition, the governor with responsibility for safeguarding is fully involved in monitoring this aspect of your work. You hold a detailed knowledge of safeguarding requirements and use this to ensure all within the school keep children safe. Recruitment checks, training logs and records are kept meticulously. When you make referrals to social care and they do not meet the local threshold of need you take appropriate additional action and follow concerns through rigorously. The slip-up in terms of the policy is an oversight and in no way typical of the school's culture of safeguarding. On the contrary, pupils' safety is the highest priority for all. Responses from parents, pupils and staff confirm this is the case.

Inspection findings

- You, your governors, staff, parents and pupils are immensely proud of your school. Your collective determination to provide a good education for the pupils at Harnham came through strongly during my visit. Those who completed Ofsted's online questionnaires had nothing but praise for your leadership and the quality of education experiences at your school.
- Staff and governors spoken to are fully supportive of you and your leadership team. They are very happy to be members of the school community and this comes through in their work. Teaching is monitored through a variety of means and wide range of information. Written records of learning walks and lesson observations provided some 'broad-brush' statements. Specific and precise examples of the impact of teaching on gains in pupils' knowledge, skills or understanding are not always evident. This is at odds to the verbal discussions held with leaders during the

inspection where leader's evaluations are clear and pertinent. Occasionally it is difficult to see how some monitoring links to school priorities. This restricts the ability of the governing body to establish if planned activities to improve the quality of leadership, teaching and pupils' learning are successful.

- Your governors share your commitment to the school. They provide good support as well as the healthy degree of challenge required of all governing bodies. In answering some wide-ranging questions, governors showed good knowledge of the school's work while being mindful of their strategic role. Decisions to strengthen the role of year group leaders, redeploy leadership roles including that of the special educational needs coordinator, start a breakfast club and appoint a parent support adviser are proving highly successful.
- You draw on your partnership work with your local cluster of schools well to identify what can be learned from other practice or through joint moderation activities. Year group leaders are growing into their new roles because of the effective support they are receiving. Sharing experiences and attending training is helping them to hold teachers more to account. One reported 'I can now hold difficult conversations but within a supportive and trusting environment.' You recognise more needs to be done to fully support their use of data and greater precision when evaluating learning is required.
- You and your governors tackle issues in a considered manner as and when they arise. Historically, absence rates at the school have been higher than the national average for all groups of pupils. Despite considerable resistance from some parents, your rigorous actions to tackle this issue have led to improvements to pupils' attendance and punctuality. A trusting and professional relationship exists allowing firm but important messages to be shared. Newsletters, assemblies and the 'Smith cup' all celebrate pupils' good and improving attendance. More pupils are arriving at school on time due to the introduction of the breakfast club. Pupils are ready, prepared and keen to attend on time because they enjoy coming to school.
- Your school curriculum is broad and well balanced. It enables all groups of pupils to develop their creative interests, such as gardening, as well as their academic developments. The effectiveness of the curriculum is reflected in the good rates of progress pupils make as they move through the school. You carefully weigh up an appropriate emphasis on personal development and academic rigour. Nurturing activities place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' aspiration and confidence. You are developing your curriculum for mathematics further. When we looked at some pupils' books together, your assistant headteacher was able to identify that some sequences of lessons do not build pupils' procedural fluency, deeper problem solving and reasoning skills deeply enough. On such occasions, pupils' learning falters.
- Following your previous inspection in July 2011 you were asked to match boys' achievement in writing to that of girls. You have successfully achieved this. Planned activities make a positive impact on boys' engagement with, and attitude to, writing. Teachers are also linking activities well to other areas of the curriculum. During our learning walks it was clear to see that

boys were writing well, across a wider range of subjects. Occasionally, teachers do not focus closely enough on the impact that word, sentence or punctuation choices have on the reader. In these instances, basic literacy skills for middle and lower ability pupils are not developed as well.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- planned experiences for pupils fully develop pupils' deep conceptual understanding, problem solving and reasoning skills in line with the new national curriculum requirements
- middle and lower ability pupils fully understand what impact their word, sentence and punctuation choices have when writing, on the reader
- monitoring activities focus on precise gains in pupils' knowledge, skills or understanding and align more closely with the priorities set out in the school development plan.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Light
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, senior leaders, heads of year groups and 12 pupils. I spoke with seven representatives from the governing body. I accompanied your assistant headteachers on visits to lessons and together we looked at work in pupils' books. I took into account the survey results from Parent View, the online Ofsted questionnaire for parents, together with responses to discussions with pupils and staff. I spoke with pupils from across the school to discuss their work and gain their views of the school. I evaluated the accuracy of your self-evaluation and reviewed a range of other documentation. I checked the effectiveness of your safeguarding and recruitment arrangements.