

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



16 July 2017

Miss Kim Wilcox
Headteacher
Western Downland Church of England Aided Primary School
Rockbourne
Fordingbridge
Hampshire
SP6 3NA

Dear Miss Wilcox

Short inspection of Western Downland Church of England Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 July 2017 with Christopher Crouch, Ofsted Inspector, 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 April 2012.

This school continues to be good

You have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your team have created a school in which high academic standards are supported by high-quality pastoral care. Staff, governors and pupils share your high expectations and work very well together. Parents are overwhelmingly positive, with many commenting on the 'nurturing environment' and the 'family feel' of the school.

Pupils are well behaved, confident and self-assured. They display great enthusiasm for learning and many told me that they 'love' school because, 'everyone is really nice', and they do 'fun learning'. Pupils are keen to talk about their achievements and learning, describing a wide range of activities with relish, including, 'exploding eggs' and solving mathematics problems. The well-planned curriculum and the very many extra-curricular activities, including residential trips, effectively support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are proud of the leadership opportunities they have, including as health and safety ambassadors, librarians and peer mediators.

You have successfully maintained the strengths of the school identified in the previous inspection report and achieved the recommendations for improvement relating to the early years foundation stage, which is now a real strength of the school. Recent staffing turbulence means that you are working to ensure consistency in the quality of teaching across the school. Your actions to develop and

support teachers have been successful and your plans to continue this work are robust.

Along with your governors, you have a very good knowledge and understanding of the strengths of the school and have set clear priorities for development. You have worked effectively with other school leaders to check and moderate plans and assessments. You have also made good use of external specialists, such as your school development adviser from the local authority. You are, rightly, working to improve the way that you monitor pupils' progress in some of the foundation subjects, such as geography and history.

The governing body is equally determined to provide the best for the pupils in your care. Governors work hard to develop their knowledge so that they are able to hold you and the leadership team to account. They provide strong support for your promotion of fundamental British values and school faith values, for example those relating to tolerance and inclusion. As a result, these values are woven through the essence of the school and help to promote pupils' development well. Governors are aware of the need to broaden their curriculum focus to make sure that they routinely challenge you about pupils' progress in all national curriculum subjects.

Safeguarding is effective

School leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of a high quality. Leaders make sure that all appropriate checks and processes are completed when recruiting staff and volunteers. You have created a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are well trained and display a secure understanding of safeguarding processes and their importance. The governor responsible for safeguarding regularly spot-checks the single central record and discusses safeguarding scenarios with staff to make sure that they are secure in their responses. Your work with external agencies is rigorous and effective, reflecting your determination to secure appropriate support for pupils and their families, when needed.

Pupils say that school is a safe place and that they can speak with any member of staff if they have any worries. They particularly like the 'listening ear' box and say that any problems, including friendship issues, get sorted out quickly. They say that there is hardly any bullying and that everyone is 'kind'. They have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe and were very sensible in the very hot weather, putting on sun hats and staying in the shade as a matter of course.

Inspection findings

- Recently, the school has experienced some turbulence in staffing. During this inspection, I considered how successfully leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching remains at a consistently high standard in the light of these changes. Your team is highly motivated and members work closely together to plan and evaluate exciting and effective activities for pupils. There is a culture of learning that runs through the school, and this means that staff are open to support and

challenge as they aspire to be the best possible. High-quality professional development activities and ongoing support mean that the consistency of learning is improving. You have robust plans to continue with this work so that all teaching is as good as the best across the school.

- School leaders are determined to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. I explored how effectively this supports pupils to be successful in their next steps. Parents appreciate the useful and interesting curriculum newsletters that are sent home each half term. Teachers plan topics that will engage and motivate pupils while providing full coverage of the national curriculum. Pupils and parents appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities that support 'Launch' activities, for example visiting a butterfly farm. There is a strong practical aspect to pupils' work, which pupils enjoy. Projects, such as the Mars landing buggies that pupils have designed, constructed and programmed as part of their technology and computing work, demonstrate the success of these topics. However, leaders are working to track pupils' progress more closely so that they have a better understanding of which pupils might need support with elements of the wider curriculum.
- I looked at the steps you have taken to improve pupils' literacy skills, especially in the early years and key stage 1. This has been a school improvement priority. Reading is promoted successfully throughout the school and pupils enjoy the wide range of texts provided for them. The vast majority of pupils are accomplished readers, meeting or exceeding expectations. Children in Reception Year have a good understanding of the purpose of their writing and were keenly and successfully crafting sentences. Pupils confidently apply their phonics skills to help their reading and writing. Careful tracking of pupils' work is used to swiftly provide them with any extra help they might need. School information and pupils' books indicate that pupils are making good progress across the school in these areas.
- Pupils at Western Downland achieve well and their progress and attainment are at or above national levels. I looked at how the more vulnerable pupils are supported and challenged to achieve well from their starting points. Staff have a good understanding of the barriers to learning faced by some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers know pupils exceptionally well and they use this knowledge to plan work that provides the right level of challenge to support each pupil. The special educational needs coordinator works very well with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families are supported. Leaders are proud of what they term their 'prevention rather than cure' approach and parents agree that the support is highly effective. These pupils make good progress from their varying starting points.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all teaching is as good as the strongest
- the school's assessment system is developed further to enable leaders to evaluate pupils' progress in the foundation subjects effectively.

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

Yours sincerely

Lucy English
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspectors met with you, other members of school staff and members of the governing body. The lead inspector also held a telephone call with your leadership and learning partner from the local authority. Together, you and the inspectors planned the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. The inspectors visited all the classes in the school, some jointly, to observe pupils' learning, speak with pupils and look in their books. They also scrutinised a sample of pupils' books. They spoke with pupils at morning break and at lunchtime. An inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day and considered 71 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 48 written contributions by parents. Inspectors spoke with staff and took account of 12 responses to the online staff questionnaire. They looked at a range of documentation, including information about the work of governors, safeguarding and behaviour. They also scrutinised and discussed the school's tracking of pupils' progress and attainment, and the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement.