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Mrs Jane Whitehouse-Sharpe
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Jane Whitehouse-Sharpe

Short inspection of Shillingstone Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 September 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 September 2010.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in teaching staff. These include two different class teachers who are responsible for pupils' learning in Years 1 to 4.

Through the accurate school evaluation, you have identified and made significant improvements to the curriculum and the way pupils are taught. A good example is the change in teaching the wider curriculum from 'topic work' to 'quest activities'. The pupils said that they were delighted to make choices in how to tackle the 'quest' activities. They said that 'quest' gave them more freedom, made them feel more involved in what was being asked of them and made their learning more purposeful and fun.

As well as ensuring that pupils have a wide breadth of experiences, the school has improved key areas. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is strong and improving. Following the previous inspection, writing has been a focus, and there have been improved progress and outcomes for pupils in all year groups. Recently, there has been a school-wide focus on improving pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills. You are aware that this needs to continue. In addition, you have identified that pupils' spelling needs to be improved.

Although few in number, pupils and staff have big welcoming hearts. This is a cohesive and compassionate community. You, and your thoughtful staff ensure that pupils are extremely well cared for. Shillingstone is a highly inclusive school. Differences are respected and celebrated. Pupils who need extra help, or who are vulnerable due to their circumstances, are getting the support they need.

The carefully designed school buildings are maximised by staff to provide a warm and welcoming learning environment. Internal spaces celebrate the work that pupils have completed and the activities, such as the gardening club, in which they are involved. You encourage parents to come into the school when dropping their children off. Parents told me that they really appreciate this opportunity. They said that it helps to make them feel a real part of the school as a family and that they enjoy seeing what other children are, and have been, doing.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, other staff and the governing body have created a strong safeguarding culture. The safeguarding of pupils is of the highest priority. Staff, governors and volunteers are vigilant and proactive. Records are meticulously kept. The school has an appropriate safeguarding policy, which staff understand; they know what to do if they have any concerns. The school works highly effectively with agencies, parents and carers to keep pupils safe. You and the governing body read and learn from serious case reviews. You then make adaptations and adjust risk assessments accordingly. School leaders and the governing body have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Pupils feel safe in school and learn how to keep themselves safe, and how to stay safe when online. They told me that they know who to go to if they are unhappy, and that their concerns are quickly dealt with and resolved by staff. The culture of the school reflects the school's values of 'courage, hope, respect, forgiveness, trust, belief, fairness, care and thankfulness'.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry on this inspection was to look at the work that the school has done to improve pupils' mathematical skills and understanding. This was because standards have moved closer to those seen nationally at the end of Year 6. They are moving closer to the pupils' higher standards and rates of progress as seen in their literacy work. The pupils' work that we saw during the inspection shows that pupils in all year groups are developing their mastery skills. They told me how the changes to mathematics have made them enjoy their learning more. All teachers include planned work that is suitably challenging for pupils, including work to deepen their understanding. However, we agreed that sometimes pupils of all abilities do not have enough opportunities to do this extension work, which limits their progress at working at greater depth.
- The inspection's second line of enquiry concerned pupils' writing in Years 1 to 4, including their writing across the curriculum. This was an area for improvement

identified in the previous inspection report. Pupils now regularly use their writing skills in different subjects. Staff check that pupils hold their pencils correctly so that they can write easily. Staff lead by example to show pupils what good writing looks like.

- Through self-evaluation by senior leaders, and the detailed analysis of pupils' work, you have increased pupils' spelling as a priority in your school improvement plan. You identified that pupils' weaker spelling, compared with their reading, was holding them back in their literacy work. Staff have completely reviewed the way in which learning to spell is taught. Pupils told me how much they enjoy the new ways of learning how to spell. They said that they find that they have clearer pictures of spelling in their heads, and are finding it much easier to learn how to spell. They showed me in their books how their spellings have improved. We also saw in pupils' books how their writing and, particularly, spelling are steadily improving in all year groups.
- My third line of enquiry looked at what the school was doing to support those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In our initial discussion, you identified this as an area of which the school is very proud. A much larger proportion of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities compared with that seen nationally. Staff and pupils help ensure that these pupils get the extra support that they need to enjoy their playtimes and to make great gains in their learning.
- The special educational needs coordinator carefully, and accurately, assesses pupils' individual needs. All staff provide additional support and interventions in lessons. The impact of the extra support to improve the pupils' individual needs is regularly reviewed. The strong communication between staff and the timeliness of the reviews enables the school to maximise the effectiveness of the additional funds provided.
- During the inspection visit, we discussed pupils' attendance. Staff and the governing body take pupils' attendance very seriously. The attendance of some pupils is limited by their health and fitness. Where pupils do not attend as often as they can, the school is quick to ensure that attendance improves, and that other agencies are involved if needed. You are doing all you can to ensure that pupils attend as often as they should.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils, of all abilities regularly do more work in mathematics to help them deepen their mastery of the subject
- pupils' spelling continues to improve.

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 Dorset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.



Yours sincerely

Steffi Penny
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We agreed the timetable and activities for the day. I worked comprehensively with you throughout the day. I met with other leaders and members of the governing body. I spoke with groups of pupils and observed them at playtime. Together, we scrutinised the quality of pupils' work and observed pupils, in all classes, learning in lessons. I took account of the 37 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, I considered the 10 responses by staff and the 15 responses by pupils to Ofsted's electronic questionnaire.

I considered a wide range of documentary evidence, including records relating to safeguarding, the quality of teaching, the curriculum, assessment information, the school's self-evaluation and development plans.