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Miss Jenny Whymark
Headteacher
Durrington Church of England Controlled Junior School
Bulford Road
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Dear Miss Whymark

Short inspection of Durrington Church of England Controlled Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 9 November 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 December 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You are precise in your understanding of current school performance and acutely aware of the many areas of strength and aspects that require further work. Consequently, you along with leaders at all levels are working on the right aspects for improvement. The school's action plan is precise, and leaders, including the governing body, monitor each action to ensure that it is bringing about the necessary changes.

Initially, you and other leaders did not act quickly enough to ensure that teaching fully met the changed requirements of end of key stage 2 assessments in 2016. Consequently, pupils' achievement dipped in 2016. You have now remedied this weakness. As a result, the proportions of pupils meeting the standards expected in reading, writing and mathematics are now in line with the national average this year. The proportion of pupils exceeding the expected standard is increasing. Teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' progress are exceptionally strong in Years 5 and 6.

At the last inspection, you were asked to ensure that pupils had ample time to learn and practise their mathematical skills. You have been largely effective. Most teachers use their assessments precisely to plan activities that build on what pupils already know, can do and understand in mathematics. This means that any gaps in

learning are filled quickly and pupils gain sufficient opportunities to practise their calculation skills and make good progress overall.

You were also asked to enable lower-attaining pupils to develop their phonics and spelling skills. This work is effective. The teaching of spelling is good. Pupils who have not yet secured their understanding of phonics are supported well. As a result, the vast majority of these pupils catch up quickly.

Teachers motivate pupils. As a result, pupils demonstrate good learning attitudes and enjoy the curriculum on offer. Pupils spoken to on inspection were particularly positive about science. Planned activities enable pupils to develop their investigative skills well. Last year, your leaders overhauled the writing curriculum. This has been successful in providing wide-ranging opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills in other curriculum areas. For example, pupils write in role about historical events to reflect their deep understanding of what life was like in the past. They also enjoy writing reports and explanations about current issues and scientific topics. As a result, writing in subjects other than English is mostly sustained and high quality.

Safeguarding is effective.

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective overall. Senior leaders and governors ensure that training is up to date and reviewed regularly so that a clear culture of safeguarding practice is embedded across the school. Staff have a good understanding of what to do should they be concerned if a child is at risk. School documentation confirms that any concerns are followed up diligently and leaders work closely with external agencies to minimise children's risk of harm. Pupils said that they feel safe and that if they have concerns they know they can talk to adults in the school. Pupils said that teachers sort out any issues quickly.

The checks you carry out when recruiting new staff are in line with national requirements to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children. The single central record is fastidiously kept. However, some aspects of ongoing risk assessments, including site safety, need to be sharpened. Statutory safeguarding requirements are met.

Inspection findings

- A key line of enquiry, to ascertain that the school remained good, was to establish the effectiveness of the teaching of writing, including grammar, punctuation and spelling. This is because pupils' outcomes in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling assessment were lower than the national average in 2016, and in 2017 spelling remained a relative weakness.
- Leaders' whole-school strategy to develop pupils' ability to edit and improve their writing is largely effective. Staff training has improved teachers' subject knowledge markedly and expectations have risen. Spelling is taught well. Most teachers expect pupils to apply their spelling rules in their writing, and, when errors are made, the vast majority of teachers pick this up as a matter of routine and help pupils to improve their work.

- The teaching of writing is good overall. Most teachers insist that pupils apply their writing skills well to produce high-quality writing. As a result, many pupils now demonstrate sophisticated sentence structure and precision when they write. However, on occasion, teaching in lower key stage 2 does not enable pupils to build on what they know, can do and understand. This is because work on offer does not help pupils to refine their sentences and word choices precisely, and this slows their progress in writing over time.
- Another aspect I examined was whether teaching was challenging enough for the middle-attaining and most-able pupils in mathematics. This is because outcomes in 2016 dipped to be below the national average. In 2017, pupils' outcomes improved to reach the national average, but some of the most able pupils did not exceed the standards expected for their age. Across the school, teachers use assessments of what pupils can do, know and understand proficiently to ensure that their mathematics teaching stretches and challenges pupils sufficiently. Work in books confirms that the middle-attaining and the most able pupils make good progress overall. Pupils are increasingly able to apply their mathematical skills to solve problems, and deepen their understanding. However, developing this aspect of mathematics is more recent. Leaders accurately identify this as an ongoing area of improvement.
- My final line of enquiry focused on how well leaders, including governors, are driving improvement at the school so that pupils' levels of achievement and attendance continue to rise, particularly those of pupils who are eligible for additional funding.
- Disadvantaged pupils make consistently good and sometimes rapid progress in reading as a result of the good-quality teaching they receive. Governors keep a close eye on how the pupil premium funding is spent. They have an acute understanding of its impact on pupils' outcomes. They do not shy away from asking challenging questions. As a result, this group of pupils are making increasingly good progress in mathematics and writing. Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average. There is no discernible difference between rates of absence for disadvantaged pupils and others in the school. Leaders have comprehensive systems in place to monitor pupils' attendance. Consequently, pupils' attendance is rising gradually.
- The new coordinator of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SENCo) is a strong and determined leader. She has already improved leadership systems to track pupils' progress. Staff training and support have led to an improvement in the quality of teaching for these pupils. The SENCo has ensured that carefully crafted individual learning targets are in place and teachers use their assessments well to inform future teaching. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are making increasingly good progress in reading.
- Governors' challenge over the last 12 months has resulted in pupils' outcomes improving in writing and mathematics. As a result, the historical differences between reading, writing and mathematics outcomes have diminished quickly. However, governors have not been rigorous enough in their strategic responsibilities for health and safety and site safety. This aspect needs to be enhanced.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of problem solving and reasoning in mathematics enables a greater proportion of middle-attaining pupils to make rapid progress so that they exceed the national expectations
- teachers' expectations are uniformly high so that pupils in lower key stage 2 make consistently good progress in writing, and an increasing proportion of pupils make rapid progress by the end of Year 4
- regular site safety checks and site risk assessments are comprehensive, and site security is enhanced.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Carrington

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke with you, senior and middle leaders and a group of governors. I also held a telephone conversation with your school improvement adviser from Wiltshire local authority. We made visits to lessons to observe pupils' learning and to scrutinise their work. I looked at pupils' workbooks in detail with you and the deputy headteacher. I also talked to pupils and listened to their views of the school.

I considered a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's self-evaluation, development plans and school performance information. I also looked at monitoring records for teaching, learning and assessment, your analysis of pupils' attendance, behaviour and safeguarding documentation.

In addition, I took account of four responses to the Parent View online survey and the free-text messaging service. I gathered the views of staff through the online questionnaire and through discussions during the inspection.