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5 February 2018

Mrs Amy Bekker-Wrench
Associate Headteacher
Chirton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
The Street
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Dear Mrs Bekker-Wrench

Short inspection of Chirton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 January 2018, 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 November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

In 2013, the school federated with All Cannings Primary School. You have worked effectively with the headteacher, now the executive headteacher of this school, to continue to improve teaching and the achievement of pupils. As a result, the school has become increasingly popular with parents and the number of pupils has risen significantly. You and the executive headteacher work well together to share expertise across the two schools. For example, your current initiative to further develop strong subject leadership for new leaders is well supported by your partner school.

Pupils enjoy their learning and value the exceptionally wide range of exciting events and visits which widen the curriculum for them. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic and make good progress when learning outdoors. This aspect of your curriculum has been developed significantly since it was an area for improvement at your previous inspection. Together, you and your staff ensure that pupils benefit from the close relationships within a small school but are not in any way limited in opportunities to learn. As one parent said, expressing the opinions of others, 'The headteacher has done an amazing job making this school what it is – a little school with a big heart.'

At the previous inspection, you were asked to ensure that the pupil premium funding was used to secure good achievement for disadvantaged pupils. Now, staff get to know disadvantaged pupils well. They identify and tackle pupils' needs and

any specific barriers to their progress effectively. Good teaching and additional support ensure that disadvantaged pupils, including those most able, are now achieving well.

You and your governors have a realistic view of the school's effectiveness and recognise where improvements need to be made to pupils' attainment and progress. Your current plans for improvement contain relevant targets for raising pupils' achievement but do not specify how the improvements will be brought about. This limits leaders' full understanding of which actions have been successful and where adjustments to other initiatives could have been made.

Safeguarding is effective.

All staff put the welfare of pupils at the heart of their work and, as a result, are vigilant in securing pupils' well-being. Leaders have developed systems and policies which support staff in understanding their responsibilities. Staff are well trained. They confidently use the school's robust procedures for reporting any concerns they may have that a pupil could be at risk. School leaders work well with other welfare agencies to ensure that families can access appropriate support, when needed.

Leaders recruit staff and volunteers carefully and carry out rigorous checks to ensure that all are safe to work with pupils. All records are well kept and fit for purpose. Governors make purposeful checks on the school's safeguarding information. They undertake regular risk assessments including those for checking that the site is safe. They recognise the need to keep site safety under review and have included this in their governors' site development plan.

Pupils feel safe in school and highlight the care they receive from all staff as being the reason they enjoy school and do well. They know the boundaries for acceptable play at playtime and behave well. As one pupil said, reflecting the confidence of the group of pupils spoken with, 'We do not tolerate bullying at this school.' Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through well-planned lessons and assemblies. Some are proud to be 'digital leaders' with special responsibility for ensuring the school's teaching on the safe use of the internet is understood by all.

Parents are very positive about how their children are safe and well cared for in school.

Inspection findings

- I reviewed how the most able pupils are challenged to achieve well in mathematics and writing and investigated how many pupils currently are showing elements of a greater depth of understanding in their work in these subjects.
- Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are challenged well in mathematics. Their workbooks show frequent and broad opportunities to solve problems and apply their mathematical reasoning through challenges in number and shape. Pupils are routinely expected to explain their thinking in mathematics. By Year 6, pupils can do this using specific mathematical language. Pupils talk positively about how

learning mathematics during outdoor investigations deepens their understanding.

- Children of Reception age are not yet receiving the same level of challenge during their work in mathematics. Consequently, children who start school with skills that are typical for their age are limited in their opportunities to achieve at a higher level. For example, numbers displayed around the indoor and outdoor classrooms do not currently go beyond ten. Collections of children's work did not show that the same emphasis is put on the teaching of number as other aspects of the curriculum.
- All teachers give pupils frequent and engaging opportunities to write at length. Teachers develop pupils' understanding of story structure particularly well. The older pupils, for example, wrote imaginatively about going through a portal to become part of the story themselves. Pupils express their ideas well and use a good range of vocabulary. However, pupils are not yet given sufficient opportunities to edit and fully develop the structure, grammar and detail in their writing. Consequently, the number of pupils writing at greater depth is limited.
- When checking whether the teaching of reading enables all pupils to achieve well, I took account of the teaching of reading comprehension in key stage 2 and teaching and pupils' learning of phonics in key stage 1 and early years. Pupils are quickly learning to read using phonics. Teachers are inventive in devising tasks which consolidate children's learning. For example, children in Reception were encouraged to make their own words by moving wooden letters on the fence posts. Pupils in key stage 1 persisted well to find and correct errors in misspelled words, using the patterns of letters they knew.
- In the Years 5 and 6 class, pupils' workbooks show that pupils are practising increasingly complex comprehension activities and are achieving well. All teachers are building pupils' stamina for reading and guiding pupils' personal reading. As a result, pupils of all ages are keen and confident readers.
- All classes are mixed-age and have pupils with a wide range of abilities. I considered how well teachers plan the curriculum to meet the breadth of pupils' different ability. This is especially relevant given the high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities in the school. Within the school's planned programmes for English and mathematics, teachers plan teaching based on what pupils need to learn next, rather than the pupil's age. This results in suitable challenge for the most able as well as support for those pupils who need to catch up.
- You provide a wide range of effective interventions for reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make particularly good progress in these high-quality programmes. All pupils who have a specific gap in their learning are able to benefit from small-group or individual support from skilful teaching assistants. Leaders track pupils' achievements closely to ensure that teaching is meeting pupils' needs.
- Finally, I reviewed the current levels of attendance and the school's support and challenge to those pupils who do not attend regularly. Leaders are vigilant in following up the whereabouts of pupils who are not in school. They work closely with the education welfare service to support families with attendance. Last year,

levels of attendance were a little higher than the national average and the number of pupils now persistently absent is very low.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of mathematics in the early years provides greater challenge so that all children achieve well
- pupils have more opportunities to improve and add greater depth to their writing
- the school improvement plan more precisely identifies how priorities are to be achieved so that leaders can evaluate the effectiveness of their actions.

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

Wendy Marriott
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you and the executive headteacher. I also spoke with your governors, a group of staff and a representative of the local authority. I met with a group of pupils and spoke with others in the playground and in lessons. Together with the executive headteacher, we observed learning in all classes and looked at a wide range of pupils' workbooks.

I scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including your self-evaluation and action plans. I also looked closely at the school's arrangements for safeguarding, including risk assessments and pupils' attendance.

I took account of the 17 responses to the online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, and the comments parents had made. I also reviewed the 15 responses to the staff questionnaire.