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Miss Jenny Purchase
Headteacher
Winterbourne Earls Church of England Primary School
Summerlug
Winterbourne Earls
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Dear Miss Purchase

Short inspection of Winterbourne Earls Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 March 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 May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Across their time at Winterbourne Earls school, pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education. The proportions of pupils, at the end of key stage 2, reaching and exceeding the standards that are expected for their age in reading and mathematics, are well above the national averages.

At the last inspection, you were asked to provide regular opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in English and other subjects. Your work to improve pupils' progress in writing is ongoing. Your recent improvement work is paying off. As a result, pupils' progress improved in 2017 and is now average when compared to other schools nationally.

The vast majority of parents and carers are very positive about the school. Almost every parent who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, reported that their child is taught well and makes good progress. They would recommend the school to another parent.

Pupils enjoy school and attend well. Most display exemplary attitudes to learning and show resilience when tackling learning. For example, pupils use and apply their mathematical skills well to solve problems and reason in mathematics. Pupils say that they enjoy opportunities to work collaboratively and value the attention their teachers provide to support them when they are finding new learning hard.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Policies, procedures and training relating to safeguarding meet requirements and are up to date. Staff recruitment checks are completed in line with national requirements to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children. The governing body takes safeguarding very seriously. Governors conduct checks on the culture of safeguarding of the school by speaking with staff and pupils and checking the single central record regularly.

Leaders with designated responsibilities for safeguarding work with a variety of external agencies to minimise pupils' risk of serious harm. Staff know how to apply their school's safeguarding policies and make referrals should they have concerns about pupils' well-being. Referrals are followed up quickly by safeguarding leaders. They ensure that they are doing all they can to keep pupils safe from harm.

Pupils say that they feel safe. The school's curriculum supports pupils' awareness of keeping safe in a range of contexts well. They talk with confidence about the risks of the internet and use of mobile phones.

Inspection findings

- My first key line of enquiry focused on pupils' progress in English across key stage 1. This is because in the recent past some previously middle-attaining pupils did not make consistently good progress in writing. The proportion of pupils meeting the standards that are expected for their age at the end of key stage 1 has been below the national average for the last two years.
- The current teaching of writing is typically good overall. Pupils enjoy writing for a range of contexts and purposes. Teachers expect pupils to use ambitious vocabulary, and this adds flair and interest to their writing successfully. As a result, a greater proportion of pupils are writing with increased sophistication and depth this year. However, some teaching does not challenge pupils to use and apply their phonics skills to write with the accuracy that is expected for their age. This hinders the progress that some middle-attaining and lower-attaining pupils make.
- Another aspect that we looked at was pupils' ability to use and apply their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills in key stage 2. Leaders' actions to establish a whole-school strategy to improve pupils' spelling are paying off. Pupils use their keyword resources in class readily. Targeted intervention teaching is enabling pupils to make accelerated progress in writing. As a result, Year 3 pupils who have previously underachieved are catching up quickly and their spelling is improving markedly. However, teaching does not enable pupils across key stage 2 to make consistently rapid progress, because the teaching of complex punctuation and sentence structure is not sufficiently strong. This acts as a barrier for some middle-ability pupils and the most able pupils from exceeding the standards that are expected for their age.
- We also looked at the assessment of children's early development in reading and writing. Children settle quickly and enjoy the early reading and writing activities

on offer in the Reception class. Children are making strong progress in learning to read and in recognising the sounds that letters make. However, on occasions, children are not supported to make the most of the activities on offer, particularly when they are exploring in the outside learning area. Adults' assessments of what children can do, know and understand are not used well enough to support children's next steps. Consequently, a small minority of children with skills and knowledge below or in line with those typical for their age do not make the progress of which they are capable, particularly in their speaking and writing skills.

- My final line of enquiry focused on the impact of leaders and governors on improving pupils' outcomes and measuring the impact of whole-school improvement initiatives. This is because in the recent past some previously middle-attaining pupils have not reached the standard that is expected nationally at the end of key stages 1 and 2.
- Leaders' checks on teaching, learning and assessment are thorough. However, leaders do not check pupils' progress from their starting points precisely enough when analysing pupils' writing. As a result, reasons for weaknesses in phonics and spelling have not been identified quickly enough. Governors have not held leaders to account with sufficient rigour for raising standards in writing. As a result, relative weaknesses in the teaching of writing have not been remedied swiftly. Consequently, although pupils typically make good progress in writing, it is not improving as quickly as it is in reading and mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching assists pupils in key stage 1 to use and apply their phonics skills well to spell accurately
- pupils use and apply their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills to write with the sophistication and accuracy that are expected for their age, and a greater proportion of pupils make rapid progress so that they exceed the standards that are expected for their age
- children in early years make swift and secure progress in their writing and speaking skills by better use of assessment
- governors hold leaders to account stringently for ensuring that their checks on teaching and learning enable all groups of pupils to make consistently strong progress.

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, other school leaders and three governors. I also met with a representative from Wiltshire local authority. We made visits to lessons to observe pupils' learning and to scrutinise their work. I met with a group of pupils to hear about 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 and behaviour, and safeguarding documentation.

In addition, I took account of 51 responses to the Parent View online survey and the free-text messaging service. I gathered the views of staff through discussions during the inspection and reviewed the online staff survey.