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Mr Dan Crossman  
Headteacher  
Collingbourne Church of England Primary School  
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Dear Mr Crossman

### **Short inspection of Collingbourne Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 15 May 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 October 2013.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

On arrival as headteacher in September 2017, you realised that urgent changes were needed to improve pupils' achievement. Since the previous inspection, outcomes across the school have declined. In 2017, the achievement of children in early years and pupils in key stages 1 and 2 was well below national averages, particularly in reading and writing.

You have a robust action plan in place that clearly sets out actions for improvement. You have also gained the support of your staff team. Together, you are raising expectations and helping pupils to achieve better. You are determined to continue to make the improvements that are still needed. This is so that the school is 'sowing the seeds of success' and helping pupils 'to be the best they can be'.

Many parents and carers commented during my visit that they appreciate your daily welcome at the gate. They value the positive difference you are making to many aspects of the school. A small number of comments included a view that pupils need a greater level of challenge in their lessons. However, all parents who responded to an online survey would recommend the school to others. All agreed that their children are happy and safe and that they are taught well.

You ensure that governors have the support they need to be able to provide good challenge to you and other leaders. You also welcome the challenge from a local authority adviser, who visits regularly to provide an external check on the progress the school is making. Governors and the external adviser agree that the school is now firmly on track to make rapid progress in improving outcomes for pupils.

At the previous inspection, it was recommended that the school improves the quality of teaching and learning, ensuring that expectations for the most able pupils are consistently high. It was also recommended that teachers have opportunities to share examples of best teaching. You have introduced a programme of coaching and mentoring for teachers, and organised the sharing of good practice with colleagues from other schools. This initiative is fairly new, but it is already helping teachers to raise the quality of their work and to bring fresh ideas to school.

You have introduced a new assessment system to help you, governors and staff to check the progress that pupils make. The information shows that current pupils are now starting to catch up and make better progress. You are still refining and improving the system. Progress is shown over the current school year; it is not easy to see how much progress pupils make over a longer period, in other words, from their starting points.

A further area for improvement recommended at the previous inspection was to develop the roles of subject leaders. You are working to define the responsibilities of subject leaders. They are already more involved in improving the quality of teaching and learning by supporting colleagues with ideas and resources. There is also recent evidence of leaders rigorously checking pupils' progress, which has led to improvements for some pupils.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is taken very seriously. You and your leadership team ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Recruitment procedures are secure and well organised. There is a culture of working closely with other agencies. This ensures that pupils and their families have the support they need to keep pupils safe and happy.

Soon after you arrived, and working with the governor safeguarding lead, you carried out a detailed audit. This was to check that all safeguarding training and procedures were in place. As a result, you have improved systems for reporting concerns. Staff have appropriate training. Checks ensure that everyone can identify and report any concerns they may have regarding pupils' safety or well-being.

### **Inspection findings**

- Together, we explored the actions taken this year to improve outcomes in reading and writing. We wanted to check this because fewer than half of the pupils who left the school last year reached the standard expected of them in reading. Pupils' progress in reading was in the lowest 20% compared with other

schools. Achievement in writing was also below national averages, and in key stage 1 has been in the lowest 20% for the last two years. We also looked at the improvements being made in early years. This was because the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has reduced over the past two years. It dipped last year to below the national average.

- The school's information shows that the numbers of pupils who are now working at the expected standard for their age in reading and writing are increasing across the school. However, information is less clear about whether this represents good progress. It is also unclear whether the most able pupils are reaching the higher standards that they should.
- You have introduced a wide and extensive range of new reading material to help support the breadth of pupils' reading. You organise books so that pupils are able to choose from them appropriately. Together with the leader for English, you help parents understand how to support their children at home with reading.
- You have re-organised reading lessons. Pupils now have regular sessions with teachers. Pupils who need extra help with reading receive it on a daily basis. As yet, leaders are not able to assess whether this extra teaching is improving pupils' reading. In addition, pupils do not have clear information about what it is they need to do to improve their reading. They also do not demonstrate a real thirst or enthusiasm for reading. Some have a limited knowledge of authors and types of books.
- You, together with your leadership team, have made improvements in writing. These include ensuring that pupils have frequent opportunities to write for longer. As a result, pupils increasingly use their writing knowledge to produce detailed, finished pieces. Pupils' books show that this is helping them to improve their writing. However, pupils' books also show that the writing in a range of other subjects is often not of the same quality. Pupils do not consistently apply their knowledge of writing when they write for different purposes. This slows their progress.
- Furthermore, books show that pupils' letter formation and handwriting vary across classes. This can be seen right from the Reception class where some pupils, towards the end of their first year, continue to form letters incorrectly. You recognise that a further improvement to improve standards in writing is to agree the approach to handwriting as a staff team.
- Staff in the Reception class are working to ensure that more children are better prepared for learning in Year 1. Indeed, current information tells us that more children than in previous years have the skills they need by the end of Reception Year. You and your leadership team are determined that these improved outcomes, particularly in writing, continue.
- A further key to raising standards is the work that the early years leader has started with local pre-schools. Staff are working more closely than in the past to ensure that children arriving in the Reception class have the skills they need to settle quickly and to make the progress they should in their first year at school.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' achievement continues to improve in each year group so that more pupils make at least good progress from their starting points, particularly in reading and writing
- a greater proportion of pupils reach higher standards in reading and writing across the school
- they develop and refine the new assessment system to ensure that staff, leaders and governors are able to identify and challenge the progress that pupils make over time
- subject leaders consistently check and challenge pupils' progress throughout the year to ensure that pupils in all year groups make at least good progress
- the teaching of reading continues to improve so that pupils develop a thirst for, and a joy in reading
- pupils have a clear idea of the next steps that they need to take to improve their reading
- agree and apply a clear strategy towards teaching the technical aspects of writing, such as handwriting
- the quality of writing across a range of subjects matches that seen in pupils' writing books
- the proportion of children reaching and exceeding a good level of development by the end of Reception Year 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 Wiltshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tonwen Empson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

We worked together throughout the day to look at learning across the school by visiting lessons and talking to pupils and staff. We also looked at pupils' writing in their books and the school's assessment information. I met with subject leaders and I also discussed reading with groups of pupils.

I gathered the views of parents at the start of the day and took account of the 26 responses and texts on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also took account of the three views on an online survey sent to staff.

I talked to a representative from the local authority who supports the school, and met with a group of governors, including the chair of governors. I scrutinised a range of school documents, including those related to school improvement and safeguarding.