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10 July 2018

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Dear Mr Hatt

Short inspection of Westbury Church of England Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 26 June 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 February 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You rightly say that the biggest contribution to the improvements seen in pupils' achievement has come from consistently good teaching over time. You have built an effective team of teachers and leaders who, with you, have given pupils the balance of stability and challenge needed to raise standards. You saw the impact of this most strongly in 2017 when Year 6 pupils, including those who were disadvantaged, reached standards and made progress well above national levels in reading and mathematics.

The school is a highly inclusive community and pupils in the Complex Needs Resource Base are well integrated into school life. They make good progress and most are able to spend part of their time in class with their peers. Pupils value the chance to work and play together. One pupil explained this by describing the school as 'a respectful and caring place where children are taught how to respond to people'. Pupils demonstrate a real enthusiasm for learning and staff morale is high. Parents recognise the 'can do' culture which underpins the school's successes. As one parent commented, 'All achievements large and small are celebrated, which makes the children want to keep on trying.'

At the previous inspection you were asked to consider how information from pupils' assessments was used to identify and prioritise areas of weakness in the school's effectiveness. You fully analyse information about pupils' achievements. Governors scrutinise the progress that pupils are making and challenge you and leaders to ensure that resources are well used. You were also asked to share the best practice

in school to continue to improve the quality of teaching. High-quality professional development from effective leaders of English and mathematics has strengthened teaching. There are other elements of the curriculum where teaching needs further improvement. You have had plans in place this year to improve writing. Current assessment information and a scrutiny of pupils' work show that there is still variability in the expectations that teachers have of pupils' work. Consequently, there are still opportunities to share the best practice more widely.

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure that the whole community is regularly trained and updated in matters of safeguarding. You and staff understand the particular challenges which the community may face to support them. Good relationships with parents and carers mean that you are well placed to support in times of difficulty. Staff are vigilant to pupils' needs and to any small changes in circumstances which mean a pupil could be at risk. They record their concerns conscientiously. Although you expect these to include the follow-up action, this did not appear to be the case. You and governors recognise the need to check routinely that procedures are clear to all staff and chronological records fully maintained. You refer matters of concern to external agencies promptly and continue to follow through with close working to ensure that pupils are safe.

Pupils say that others are friendly and that falling out is quickly resolved. They say that trusted adults give them privacy if they have any concerns they need to talk through. Pupils can explain the steps needed to protect their personal information online. They see school as a safe and caring part of their lives.

Pupils behave well in class and in the playground. The need for exclusion has been all but eliminated. This is because of high-quality pastoral support and because pupils enjoy school and want to do well. Statistically, the proportion of pupils that have been persistently absent has been higher than national levels. Further scrutiny, however, shows that figures are skewed by the complex medical needs of some pupils. Nonetheless, you robustly support and challenge the small group of parents who keep their children away from school for no good reason. Currently, the level of persistent absence is lower than that of last year. However, there remains a need for continued vigilance to ensure that this improvement continues.

The full range of checks are carried out and recorded to show that adults working with pupils are safe to do so.

Inspection findings

- First, I looked to see if pupils are continuing to make consistently strong progress. The 2017 outcomes showed that progress has continued to improve since the previous inspection. You take account of pupils' starting points when they start with you at the beginning of key stage 2. You and subject leaders discuss pupils' progress regularly with teachers to ensure that no pupil is slipping behind. If they are, teachers are given advice on how to adapt their teaching and pupils are given extra help through effective interventions.

- Over time, pupils are continuing to make good progress, although current assessments show that the exceptional progress seen in 2017 is not being replicated this year. The analysis of progress across the year groups shows that there is variability. For example, pupils have made exceptional progress in Year 6 this year in reading and writing. Your English and mathematics leaders who teach in Year 6 identified that 'catch-up' was needed and they have been effective in achieving this. You say that pupils take time to build on their key stage 1 starting points and that this accounts for the variability in progress across the school. However, there are aspects of teaching which also vary in effectiveness. Pupils' workbooks show that there is variability in expectation of how neatly and clearly pupils set out their work in their books. Some teachers use pupils' targets more effectively than others, to raise the level of challenge and hasten pupils' progress. There are therefore still some aspects of the school's best practice which could be shared.
- You have identified the development of the teaching of writing as a key area for improvement and the impact of this formed my second line of enquiry. Pupils' workbooks show that they write diligently, purposefully and at length. This year you have increased the opportunities for them to practise their writing in subjects other than English. They are well taught about how to set out and adapt their style for different forms of writing. Overall, their improved sentence formation and punctuation are adding accuracy and interest to their writing.
- All teachers are guiding pupils to use prompts to help them write well. For example, in the Year 3 classes, pupils were given sheets of appropriate vocabulary to guide their writing about 'Catch A Lot', a story about whaling. Older pupils use mnemonic reminders efficiently to help them check for example that they have included figurative language and conjunctions in their writing. The impact of this is best seen in the mature and expressive writing of the most able pupils. Those of middle ability working to reach the higher standard lack the accurate use of the more adventurous vocabulary they want to include in their writing. Accurate spelling remains a weaker aspect for this group of pupils, some of whom are disadvantaged.
- I next looked at the breadth and balance in the school's science curriculum. In 2017, outcomes showed that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in science was not, for instance, as high as that in mathematics and reading. You have appointed a new leader for the subject, but, as yet, it is too soon for improved leadership to have had an impact on pupils' achievement. You and governors agreed to reduce the science curriculum for Year 6 to enable them to catch up in basic skills. This has meant that currently it is unclear how many of the Year 6 pupils are on course to attain the standard expected for their age in science.
- In other year groups, pupils carry out experiments to learn about, for example, air resistance and the water cycle. They record their findings in charts and tables and draw conclusions. However, the work in pupils' books does not show clear progression in building and securing the expected levels of skill in recording, presenting and explaining findings from their experiments.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers place a stronger emphasis on developing pupils' range of vocabulary and their accuracy in spelling, thereby quickening progress, especially that of pupils of middle ability
- the school's system for setting pupils targets to improve their work is used consistently well by all teachers to accelerate progress
- the curriculum for science is strengthened so that all pupils have the teaching and learning experiences needed to deepen their skills of scientific enquiry.

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

I visited all classes with you and looked at a sample of pupils' work in science and writing. I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation, school development plans and the current assessment information, which you hold. I checked the school's systems for safeguarding, including current attendance information. I talked to a few staff about the impact of their safeguarding training. I held meetings with a group of governors and a representative of the local authority. I spoke to pupils in their lessons and in the playground. I met with a group of pupils who spoke to me about their experience of school life. I took account of the 16 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View and the eight additional comments. I spoke to parents at the start of the school day and took account of the one letter handed to me. Thirteen staff had completed the staff questionnaire and I took account of their views.