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Mr Trevor Davies  
Headteacher  
Pamphill Voluntary Controlled Church of England First School  
Pamphill Green  
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Dorset  
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Dear Mr Davies

### **Short inspection of Pamphill Voluntary Controlled Church of England First School**

Following my visit to the school on 17 July 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 March 2014.

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.**

Since the previous inspection, a range of external factors, such as building and budgetary concerns, have distracted you from focusing closely on the quality of education in the school. Subsequently, you have been slow to notice or react where teaching and learning is too weak. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, particularly in key stage 1, mean that pupils are not capitalising on the strong start they get when they leave the Reception class. However, throughout the duration of their time in the school, pupils' achievement recovers and most are ready for the transition to middle school at the end of Year 4.

You agree that the school's systems and processes are not sufficiently robust and lack the rigour and precision needed to improve teaching and learning. This includes checking how well the pupil premium strategy is working for the few pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding, including the most able. In addition, leaders at all levels do not ensure that pupils' progress is the primary focus for monitoring and evaluation. Consequently, when pupils' learning stalls, it is not identified quickly enough. Leaders' monitoring has not been sufficiently focused or well timed to enable pupils to make strong progress to reach the standards expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics. In particular, pupils' current work in books reflects weak progress and confirms the disappointing standards seen in 2018 key

stage 1 teacher assessments. Leaders' action plans are not precise or clear. For example, they do not use measurable outcomes or expectations to inform teaching and learning, or for holding teachers to account.

Pupils work and play well together. They like having additional responsibilities that contribute to the daily running of the school. For example, house captains are proud of their role and 'play pals' are keenly aware of their responsibilities to look out for others who may need a friend. Pupils, parents, carers and staff typically agree that Pamphill First is a happy school. The overwhelming majority of parents are pleased with the school and its ethos, where 'every child is cared for'. Staff build positive relationships with pupils to ensure that pupils feel valued and respected. Furthermore, teachers work effectively with staff in the pre-school and from middle schools to ensure that transition is well managed when pupils join and leave the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. However, administration and record-keeping are not orderly, so staff are having to work between systems, files or folders to manage their affairs. This does not make pupils unsafe but does add unnecessary complexities and is a potential barrier to best practice. These weaknesses have not been identified by the governing body which, as yet, has not checked the school's processes, including the single central record. However, staff recruitment vetting and pre-employment checks are appropriately completed, including for volunteers and supply staff, to keep pupils safe.

Leaders promote a culture of safeguarding. Pupils feel safe; for example, they do not feel there is bullying in the school. Pupils know about a range of other dangers and risks, including internet safety and fire. They told me that they trust staff and believe adults will take the right action to look after them.

You ensure that staff know what to do if they have any concerns or worries about pupils' welfare. You respond to concerns quickly and seek external advice, including from the appropriate safeguarding services, to ensure that pupils are cared for and looked after in a timely and appropriate manner.

### **Inspection findings**

- We evaluated how well the school's pupil premium strategy is working in support of disadvantaged pupils. You and other staff know the pupils and their backgrounds well. You use this information to provide some essential social and emotional interventions for them. This helps them to settle and develop confidence and self-belief. In addition, a few academic interventions for identified pupils are enabling them to start catching up, such as in mathematics.
- However, the pupil premium strategy is not well considered or targeted to ensure that these vulnerable pupils make consistently good progress. As a result, too few are reaching the relevant age-related expectations or milestones to be

prepared for the next stage in their education, including for those lower-achieving pupils who need to catch up quickly. In addition, teaching is not consistently enabling the most able pupils to reach the highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Leaders, including governors, do not ask the right probing questions or check the achievement of disadvantaged pupils rigorously. This contributes to a limited awareness or understanding of how well the pupils are doing. For example, governors are unclear about where the responsibility for disadvantaged pupils lies and which personnel are taking the lead in this.
- We also focused on pupils' achievement and progress in key stage 1. Our scrutiny of pupils' workbooks confirms that pupils are not making consistently strong progress from their prior attainment at the end of the early years. In particular, teachers do not have high enough expectations to build quickly on what pupils already know, understand and can do. Therefore, some pupils take too long to learn and apply knowledge or skills expected of them by the time they leave key stage 1.
- Teachers do not make the best use of assessment information or tailor work closely enough to pupils' needs. For example, learning objectives are too similar and not refined sufficiently to either stretch the most able or to provide the right support for lower-achieving pupils. As a result, teachers are not consistently providing the right challenge at the right time to help pupils make strong enough progress. This is seen starkly in the teaching of key mathematical concepts and writing. Similarly, the teaching of reading is not well considered to support individual pupils in their understanding of texts.
- However, the teaching of phonics is a strength. Pupils are confident in knowing their letters and sounds. They use this to help them read with increasing confidence and speed. In addition, workbooks show valuable links for pupils to write across the curriculum, for example when writing about historical events such as the Great Fire of London. These opportunities enthuse pupils and give them purpose and a context for learning.
- We also examined how well pupils are achieving by the time they leave the school. In most cases, during their time in Years 3 and 4, pupils are taught effectively and are able to catch up. This ensures that the majority are ready for the next stage in their education. However, this is inconsistent for some disadvantaged pupils and those who have fallen behind through key stage 1. For example, we observed gaps in pupils' knowledge in spelling, punctuation and grammar for writing, or weaknesses in solving problems in mathematics. This adversely affects some pupils and stalls their progress.
- Pupils enjoy the breadth of their learning and experiences in key stage 2. For example, pupils proudly showed me their 'bug hotels' and log piles which they have constructed in science. They also spoke enthusiastically about other experiences, including studying seascapes by William Turner or learning French. As a result, pupils are developing understanding and deepening their knowledge across the curriculum to be prepared for middle school.

- Finally, we evaluated the school's approach to improving attendance. You check pupils' attendance with an external officer on a termly basis. However, your work has had limited impact. The attendance of pupils is below the national average, in particular for some pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, as well as disadvantaged pupils. This is an additional barrier to enabling some to make strong academic progress.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- implement and closely monitor a revised pupil premium strategy so that disadvantaged pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics, including the most able
- improve the consistency and quality of teaching in the school, particularly in key stage 1
- hold teachers to account for the progress of different groups and individuals through precise and rigorous monitoring arrangements.

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

Yours sincerely

Stewart Gale  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

We agreed the timetable and activities for the inspection. I worked extensively with you, including sampling a range of pupils' work and talking with pupils through inspection activities. I scrutinised safeguarding records and we discussed a wide range of related matters, including staff recruitment, training and vetting arrangements. I spoke to pupils and staff about their views of safeguarding. I evaluated evidence that shows how you work with other agencies to keep children safe. I worked with you, in particular, in following key lines of enquiry into key stage 1 and 2 classes. I met with representatives of the governing body and reviewed school documents, including the school's self-evaluation summary, the school's development plan and records of governors' visits. I took full account of the 11 responses on Parent View, as well as the free-texts received through the inspection. I also met with some parents at the start of the inspection and spoke with a representative of the local authority.