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Mrs Jackie Gunter
Headteacher
Hindon Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, St Mary's and St John's
School Lane
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Wiltshire
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Dear Mrs Gunter

Short inspection of Hindon Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, St Mary's and St John's

Following my visit to the school on 25 September 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 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, you have led the school through a period of considerable change to the teaching and support staff. Two of the school's three classes have new teachers who have joined the school during the last year. You are now building a team whose members share your determination to raise standards. Together with governors, you make sure that staff morale is high and that there is a strong sense of teamwork. You rightly identify in your plans to improve the school the need to raise pupils' achievement in writing and, in particular, their spelling. However, it is too early to see the impact that your plans are making on pupils' progress. In recent years, pupils' attainment in writing and in English grammar, punctuation and spelling has fallen, and is now below the national average.

At the time of the previous inspection, you were asked to improve the quality of phonics teaching so that by the end of Year 1, all pupils have mastered the most important early reading skills. Pupils' scores in the Year 1 phonics screening check have remained below the national average in recent years. This means that over time, a number of pupils have left both the Reception and Year 1 classes without the skills they need to read fluently.

One of the school's strengths is its work to make sure pupils enjoy a range of experiences which ignite their interest. Pupils learn in vibrant and inspiring classroom environments, and benefit from a wide range of educational visits that enrich the curriculum. Pupils I spoke to take great pride in their school and appreciate the care that they receive from staff. Parents and carers are very positive about the school's community spirit and supportive ethos. One parent's comment was typical of many: 'Our children are extremely happy and do well because of this safe and nurturing environment.' School assemblies are a much-valued opportunity for teachers to celebrate pupils' successes.

The previous inspection requested that you consolidate procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching. Leaders now make regular checks on learning in lessons and pupils' progress in their workbooks. These checks have enabled leaders and governors to identify priorities. However, you recognise that your actions have not yet secured the improvements needed for all pupils to make good progress over time.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors ensure that pupils' safety and welfare are high priorities. As designated safeguarding lead, you make sure that staff training is up to date and that staff understand their responsibilities. You keep thorough records and act swiftly to follow up concerns, including by involving external agencies. A knowledgeable and proactive safeguarding governor works with you to review the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. Vetting checks on staff, governors and volunteers are carefully recorded.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They told me the school 'teaches us to be kind,' and that bullying is extremely rare. When they have a worry, they are confident that adults will listen. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to stay safe online.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to investigate pupils' progress in writing in key stage 2. Over time, attainment in writing has been much lower than in reading and mathematics, and pupils' average spelling scores have been too low. You have made sure that teachers plan spelling tasks which are closely matched to expectations for their age. Your improvement plans identify developing pupils' writing across a range of subjects and contexts as a priority.
- We agreed that there is still more work to be done to make sure that pupils spell accurately. Across key stage 2, pupils of all abilities show weak knowledge of key spelling patterns. For example they write 'storis', instead of 'stories', or 'injurd', instead of 'injured'. We noted inaccuracies in the pupils' correction of their spelling mistakes and inconsistent use of guidance from teachers to improve their work. As a result, poor spelling often hinders pupils' progress in writing.
- We also looked at the extent to which pupils write in depth across a range of subjects. Current pupils' workbooks show that, although improving, their writing

is not sufficiently developed across the curriculum. Pupils do not write at length at a high enough standard, or develop their composition skills and grammatical accuracy. Your plans to make sure that pupils receive precise targets to help them improve their writing are in their early stages. As a result, pupils' progress is still not consistently good enough.

- Next, I considered the progress pupils make in reading and phonics across early years and key stage 1. Over time, too few pupils have achieved the standards in phonics expected of them by the end of Year 1 and have not always caught up by the end of Year 2.
- You have made sure that children now make a strong start with their reading in the Reception class. We observed children enjoying well-planned activities to help them to understand letters and the sounds that they represent. In addition, children in Reception class demonstrate their ability to blend sounds to build words when reading. As a result of teachers' careful assessment of their needs and effective support from adults, children in Reception are now making good progress in reading.
- Although results of assessments in 2018 show that more pupils caught up to the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 2, results for the Year 1 pupil cohort remained below average and too low. You have invested in new resources and supported staff to plan lessons based on their knowledge of what pupils can and cannot read. Some pupils, however, still lack secure knowledge of the sounds that single letters represent and the ability to blend sounds together. This prevents them from tackling new words with confidence. Some reading resources do not match the level of pupils' understanding and can present too much or too little challenge. You have rightly identified the need to support these lower attaining pupils more effectively.
- Next I considered how well leaders and teachers use the information from their assessments of what pupils know and can do to make sure that pupils make good progress over time. In recent years, the progress that some pupils make in key stage 1, including the most able, has not matched that of similar pupils nationally, and is not good enough.
- You regularly discuss information from pupils' assessments with teachers and set targets for each pupil's achievement. Teachers now challenge the most able pupils more effectively. As a result, more pupils reached the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 in 2018. Teachers use information from their assessments to plan activities which deepen pupils' understanding and mastery of mathematical concepts. Even so, teachers' assessments of reading and writing are not used as effectively as those in mathematics.
- Finally, I investigated attendance. You have reduced the amount of persistent absence, where a small number of pupils missed school regularly. You make parents aware of the importance of regular attendance by providing them with regularly updated reports on how well their children attend. Recent information shows that the overall rate of absence in the school is still too high. However, you and your team are determined to ensure that pupils do not miss out on learning without good reason.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils with lower starting points catch up to the standards expected of them in reading in early years and key stage 1
- pupils across key stage 2 show greater accuracy in their spelling, and write at length across a range of subjects
- they continue their work to improve rates of attendance and reduce the number of pupils who regularly miss school.

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

Claire Mirams
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and your governors. We reviewed your plans for improvement, information on current pupils' progress and your own evaluation of teaching and the school's performance. We observed teaching and heard pupils read together.

I met with a group of pupils and discussed their viewpoints on the curriculum, behaviour, bullying and keeping safe, including online. I scrutinised various safeguarding records and current information about school attendance. I spoke to a representative of Wiltshire local authority on the telephone, as well as reviewing records of external reviews by Wiltshire local authority. I reviewed a range of pupils' workbooks.

I also considered 13 responses to the online survey, Parent View. There were no responses to the staff survey or the pupil survey.