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Mrs Alison Trickey  
Headteacher  
Milton-on-Stour Church of England Primary School  
Milton-on-Stour  
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Dear Mrs Trickey

### **Short inspection of Milton-on-Stour Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 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.

You have continued to develop a culture of high expectations since taking up your appointment to the school in September 2017. Your commitment to providing a broad curriculum that supports pupils' personal and academic development equally well is welcomed and much appreciated by the school community. You ensure that the school's vision of 'believing, achieving and growing together' permeates the life of the school. High standards of respect run through your welcoming community where everyone has a voice and is valued. You have the trust of staff, pupils, parents and carers and have been quick to enhance the strong and productive working practices already in place. The school's continuing success is sustained by the collective contribution made by you, staff, governors, pupils and parents.

You, your leadership team and the governors are working very closely together. You are all very clear about what is going well and what needs to improve. You wasted no time in establishing that improvement was needed in the way pupils are assessed and their progress is checked over time. Revised procedures are enabling teachers to identify quickly which pupils need additional help to make good progress, and those pupils who are ready for additional challenges. Taking account of this information, teachers are modifying their planning so that it increasingly reflects precisely what pupils need to learn next. This is ensuring that more pupils are making good or rapid progress this year. You recognise that these procedures need to be kept under review and modified as necessary so that they have the best

possible impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.

The overwhelming majority of parents express their full confidence in the school. 'There is an ethos of respect, friendship and encouragement throughout the school, and I feel welcomed as a parent,' reflected the views expressed by many parents. They are confident that the school looks after their children well and keeps them safe. Pupils enjoy school. They identify many 'best things' about school, including how they are helped to understand how to behave towards one another and their strong friendships. They also appreciate the wide range of activities they engage in during lessons and in after-school clubs. You have high aspirations for pupils and are quick to recognise their efforts, as well as their successes. This approach makes a significant contribution to pupils' positive self-esteem, their often exemplary behaviour and their confident attitude to learning in lessons.

Improvement since the last inspection is evident across the school. At that time, it was noted that subject leaders and governors needed to take a greater role in leading school improvement. The governing body and subject leaders have responded well to good-quality training. Their collective actions are securing improvement. A wide variety of strategies to check the quality of teaching and learning are enabling a swift response to any underperformance seen. Teachers are also working together more closely, sharing best practice and learning from each other. Younger pupils are now encouraged to be curious and to find things out for themselves and, throughout the school, pupils are given time to consolidate their learning in mathematics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You, your leadership team and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are meticulously maintained and any concerns are followed up promptly with other professionals. Staff training is regularly updated so that they remain vigilant and alert to any potential dangers to pupils. You work closely with parents to ensure that pupils are safe. Pupils with very specific needs receive additional, thoughtful and practical support to ensure that they are well cared for while in school.

You invest significant time in supporting pupils' emotional and social development. Pupils reported that they 'never feel alone' and 'grown-ups notice if you are upset or on your own and help you to sort things out'. Their confidence in the school is high and they quickly develop strategies for managing risk to themselves in a range of situations. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using modern technology. As a consequence of the trusting relationships they develop, pupils feel able to talk about any concerns they may have. They are confident that they would receive support from adults if necessary. Pupils reported that the vast majority of pupils behave well and 'get on well together'. Incidents of bullying are considered very rare events and fallings-out are 'usually just misunderstandings'. The school's calm, tolerant and supportive atmosphere allows pupils to focus on their learning and to enjoy the company of their friends.

## Inspection findings

- We agreed to explore how well pupils make progress in Years 1 and 2, particularly those who did not achieve a good level of development in the early years.
- You have ensured that the assessment of pupils' skills and knowledge is thorough and increasingly accurate. Training has helped teachers to interpret assessment information more effectively and to better understand exactly what pupils are expected to know, and be able to do, in each year group. They are using this improved knowledge and skill with increasing confidence and precision to guide their planning. Increased opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge of letter sounds when reading and writing are having a strong impact on their learning. Pupils' understanding in mathematics is improving. They have many opportunities to work with practical resources and to discuss the reasons for the choices they make when calculating or solving problems.
- Teachers are reflective and, where necessary, modify their planning to better address what pupils need to learn next. Pupils needing additional support are identified quickly and help is provided so that their learning does not slow. Similarly, those pupils who learn at a faster rate are provided with additional challenges to ensure that their learning continues to move forward well. You recognise that further improvement is needed, but pupils who did not achieve a good level of development in the early years are catching up, with some already at the standard expected.
- Our other lines of enquiry concerned pupils' progress in writing and mathematics through key stage 2. We focused on pupils who, in Year 2, were in the middle prior-attainment band because the progress made by these pupils has, in some years, been less than expected. This year, in writing and mathematics, more pupils are already at the expected or higher standard in Years 3 to 6 than was the case last year. You recognise, however, that pupils could do even better and that, to secure this, the school's journey of improvement needs to continue.
- Teachers have received training to support them in making better use of assessment information to guide their planning. Their subject knowledge of the small steps necessary for each pupil to move forward quickly with their learning in writing and mathematics has improved. Pupils receive precise feedback about their work, and individual challenges engage them in their personal learning journey. Pupils work hard in lessons and show high levels of resilience. They want to learn and are proud of their achievements.
- Pupils' engagement in and enthusiasm for writing are enhanced when activities are linked to topic work and their learning in other subjects. For example, having completed research into the 'Seven Wonders of the World,' pupils in Years 4 and 5 used this information to create a presentation using a laptop computer. You have increased the focus on the importance of pupils spelling accurately and using rich and engaging vocabulary. These actions are lifting the quality of pupils' writing and progress, including those in the middle prior-attainment band.
- Following a whole-school review, the profile of mathematics has been raised. Leadership has succeeded in promoting 'fun' mathematics. The use of games and

quizzes promotes pupils' engagement well, for example through homework challenges and an increased focus on making learning times tables enjoyable. Pupils' ability to calculate quickly and accurately has improved as a result, and they confidently tackle mathematics tasks. Increasing the emphasis on problem-solving and talking about mathematics are also contributing well to the quickening of pupils' progress, including those pupils in the middle prior-attainment band.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers in all year groups continue to refine and embed the use of assessment information to guide their planning so that it identifies precisely what pupils need to learn next
- the progress made by pupils in Years 1 and 2 improves further so that more achieve the expected or greater-depth standard in reading, writing and mathematics
- the progress made by pupils in writing and mathematics in Years 3 to 6 improves further so that more achieve the expected or higher standard by Year 6.

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

Alison Cogher  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and leaders responsible for English and mathematics. Eight governors, including the chair of the governing body, met with me to discuss their aspirations for the school's future and the progress made since the previous inspection. I had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. The views of parents were gathered as they dropped their children off at the start of the school day and through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I spoke to pupils in their lessons and at break and lunchtime. Responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered. Together we visited each of the classes and looked at a sample of pupils' work and information about their progress. I considered a number of school documents, including those relating to safeguarding and school self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.