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Mrs Linda Wood
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Wood

Short inspection of Chieveley Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 November 2015, 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 June 2011.

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 ensured that a vibrant ethos pervades the school. Pupils show high levels of enthusiasm for learning. They enjoy coming to school and are appreciative of the wide range of activities that are available to them. Lessons are full of appropriate praise and encouragement alongside suitable use of light-hearted humour. Relationships between pupils and teachers are strong and supportive. Pupils are unanimous in their praise of their teachers, saying that 'Learning at Chieveley is fun!'

Since the previous inspection, standards have continued to rise. Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are high and many pupils make good progress, achieving standards above those expected for their age. Many pupils achieve the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as their peers, with some making exceptional progress from low starting points. This is because tasks are well matched to their starting points. However, tasks for the most-able pupils are not always challenging enough. When this is the case, their progress slows.

You make well-founded judgements of the school's performance, describing it as 'solidly good'. You acknowledge that, with recent changes to staffing, including to leadership roles, the school is in a period of change. New leaders and new staff are

developing their skills and expertise. Governors are working closely with the local authority to develop their skills further. This work is at an early stage. You are leaving at the end of term and governors are advertising for a new headteacher for the summer term. Despite changing times, you have implemented sound systems to ensure that relatively inexperienced leaders are encouraged to act decisively. For example, the recently retired teacher for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is offering helpful support to the new teacher with this responsibility. The school is beginning to make better use of experienced colleagues' skills than in the past, so that time is not lost.

At the time of the last inspection, inspectors noted that attendance was high. It has risen further over the last three years as pupils' absence has declined. Pupil numbers have increased: the school is popular, with many pupils enrolling from beyond the school's local area. Inspectors also identified a need to ensure that all teachers consistently focus sharply on the next steps in learning for each pupil. Pupils now receive more opportunities to gain understanding of the rich diversity of cultural and faith traditions of people living in the United Kingdom, and the school ensures that leadership responsibilities are shared more widely.

Leaders have addressed all of these aspects effectively:

- Pupils receive helpful and timely feedback on a regular basis. Pupils value the time they are given to improve their work or sort out their mistakes. Many pupils make great gains in their understanding as a result. Teachers' marking is of high quality throughout the school.
- Pupils are developing their understanding of other faiths and talk knowledgeably about different religions. They have less experience of modern British values such as democracy and the rule of law. The school plans to elect school councillors and house captains imminently as a means of introducing first-hand experience of democracy in action.
- More staff now monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, supporting the headteacher well in the school's drive for improvement. Key-stage and subject leaders undertake high-quality monitoring activities on a regular basis.

Safeguarding is effective.

You take an uncompromising stance on keeping children safe, affirming that children learn best when they feel safe, secure and nurtured. All staff, who share your inclusive approach, echo this view. Effective safeguarding procedures are the mainstay of the school's work. Policies are regularly reviewed and pay due regard to statutory and local authority guidance. Pupils show a clear understanding of the school's procedures and routines. During the inspection, one pupil clearly explained to the inspector that it was safe to talk to visitors who wear green lanyards as school

leaders checked them. This level of attention contributes well to pupils feeling secure and safe.

Staff are trained regularly. Four members of staff have enhanced responsibilities for child protection, including a lunchtime supervisor. Work with agencies, including 'Support for Families', is robust and the school is quick to use outside expertise when necessary. Parents agree that their children are well cared for. They are confident in the school's day-to-day procedures such as the supervision of children at playtimes and the administration of first aid, if required.

Inspection findings

- Pupils receive helpful and timely feedback on a regular basis. Pupils value the time they are given to improve their work or sort out their mistakes. Many pupils make great gains in their understanding as a result. Teachers' marking is of high quality throughout the school.
- You and other leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need further development. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. You are a reflective leader, keeping a watchful eye at all times on the school's performance. As a result, you are quick to notice any dips or anomalies in performance and set about implementing remedial actions post-haste.
- Teachers are proud to be part of Chieveley Primary School and are united in their ambition to be the best they can be. Team spirit is strong and teachers work diligently, supporting one another to improve their skills. On leaving Chieveley, many go on to promotion. Newly qualified teachers are well supported by more experienced teachers. Although the teaching team has changed considerably since the previous inspection, standards have been maintained.
- Teachers plan interesting and stimulating activities for pupils. In the Reception class, activities are matched closely to children's interests. Children demonstrate high levels of engagement: they listen well and work hard.
- Teachers have fully embraced, and benefited from, recent training on using assessment information to promote learning. Consequently, pupils fully understand what they are expected to learn and try hard to rise to the challenges set, displaying high levels of resilience and persistence. However, the most-able pupils do not have sufficient time to tackle more challenging work, as too much time is spent working on concepts they have already grasped.
- Pupils are increasingly able to reflect upon their learning. Teachers provide helpful and regular feedback. Pupils are clear about how they will improve their work next time using their popular 'purple pens of perfection'. Other leaders have made a useful contribution to developing this aspect of the school's work. Marking and feedback are of high quality across the school.

- In recent times, leaders have redoubled their expectations of the standard of classroom displays. Displays throughout the school are of a consistently high standard and include striking artwork, high-quality descriptive writing and useful prompts to further learning in literacy and mathematics. Learning environments reflect the school's ethos well, placing high-quality learning at the forefront for pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well. Activities are carefully designed to meet their individual learning needs. In addition, highly skilled teaching assistants confidently lead bespoke learning sessions, carefully tailored to the needs of the pupils. Many disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress, with some making exceptional progress.
- You pay close attention to meeting the needs of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. Leaders use additional funding well to provide tailored support programmes. As a result, gaps in pupils' achievement quickly close and pupils make rapid progress. The small numbers of disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as, and in some cases better than, their peers.
- Revisions to pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) are now ensuring a more comprehensive coverage of values, including learning about rights and responsibilities. However, this is at an early stage and pupils' understanding of modern British values such as democracy and the rule of law is not as developed as it could be.
- The local authority has provided useful support, honing in sharply on aspects of school performance that require development. For example, an adviser from governor services is supporting the governing body in developing its skills and expertise. In recent times, the local authority has used the school to host a range of training for other schools and governors. This is because Chieveley staff are welcoming, classroom displays are of high quality and opportunities to share 'Chieveley skills' more widely are of benefit to other schools. The headteacher also mentors two other local headteachers.
- Pupils are positive about their school experience, praising teachers for helping them to learn well. They express their views with clarity, displaying high levels of self-confidence. The head boy and head girl relish the opportunity to hold additional responsibilities, leading tours of the school for governors and visitors with a high degree of self-assurance. They epitomise what is expected of Chieveley pupils.
- The curriculum is stimulating and interesting to pupils. Pupils respond well to learning opportunities such as using *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* as a stimulus for descriptive writing. Parents value the regular communication they receive. Many are positive about the school's approach to homework. Pupils believe in practising their skills regularly and relish opportunities to consolidate new concepts. As one pupil commented, 'Homework helps new things sink in and then I learn better.'
- Sports funding is used particularly well to promote wider participation in a variety of sports. Pupils acknowledge that they benefit from a wide menu of activities including gymnastics, judo, football and netball.

- Governors are proud of the school and are determined it continues to improve further. They have recently reorganised their committees so they are better placed to oversee school improvement priorities. Governors have completed an audit of their skills but they have yet to use the findings to inform how they might develop their effectiveness further. The Chair of the Governing Body visits the school regularly. However, governors' knowledge of their statutory responsibilities is sometimes limited and this hinders their ability to hold leaders strongly to account. For example, some required policies are overdue for review.
- Transition arrangements are comprehensive. Children in the Reception class settle into school life quickly and happily. Parents are highly appreciative of the opportunity to meet the headteacher when new to the school and say that their children greatly benefit from the three induction sessions on offer. Equally, when older pupils join the school they settle quickly, make new friends and many make rapid progress in their learning.
- Since the last inspection, building work has been completed. The school benefits from brighter, more spacious classrooms, which are well organised and suitably resourced. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to use different resources to support their learning. They talk animatedly about the wide range of reading materials available to them.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the progress of the most-able pupils is accelerated by ensuring that activities are appropriately challenging
- the effectiveness of the governing body is increased in order to hold leaders to account
- pupils' understanding and experience of modern British values are increased.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Farr

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, other leaders, teachers, pupils, two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body and the Clerk to the Governing Body. I spoke to a representative of West Berkshire local authority by telephone. We visited seven lessons and saw every class. I scrutinised pupils' work alongside the Key Stage 1 leader, two teachers with responsibility for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and the deputy headteacher. I took account of 56 responses by

parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I observed pupils' behaviour at break and around the school. I spoke to a number of parents at the beginning of the school day. I analysed a range of school documentation, including information about pupils' achievement, the school improvement plan and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. We discussed your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness.