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Mrs Philippa Winbolt
Dauntsey Academy Primary School
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Dear Mrs Winbolt

Short inspection of Dauntsey Academy Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 3 February 2016, 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 January 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

- You are providing strong and determined leadership for Dauntsey Academy Primary School. You display a clear vision and are highly ambitious for the pupils, staff and parents of the school. Since September 2015, when you took up your post, your strong commitment and passion for improving the quality of education for all who learn and work at the school has shone through. You have quickly established a very welcoming and caring culture, which pupils, parents and staff report is 'friendly, happy and enjoyable'. Despite significant changes in leadership, staffing and governance, you have ensured that the quality of education remains good. Your strong leadership is appreciated by parents and staff alike and illustrates the school's capacity for further improvement.
- Pupils' achievement for all groups across the school is good because you have a clear understanding of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. A higher proportion of pupils reach a good level of development by the end of Reception when compared to the national average. Attainment in the Year 1 phonics check is also above average. Almost all pupils reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils' overall attainment is above the nationally expected standard. The proportion of pupils making more than the expected

rate of progress between Year 2 and Year 6 is similar to other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics. However, in 2015 pupils' attainment and progress in writing dipped. Your rigorous plans and well-considered actions are arresting any further decline and quickly raising pupils' achievement to their previous high levels. In order to achieve this, you are making sure that teachers make the best use of information about pupils' prior attainment to plan activities that build on their skills, knowledge and understanding.

- You have carefully managed the significant number of staff changes and new appointments that occurred during the previous year. Effective support from headteacher colleagues has ensured that the changes have not hindered the work of the school. You, all staff and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school's action plans address the key priorities and clearly set out what you hope to achieve. All have contributed to the improvement priorities and have helped to draw up action plans. Consequently, staff feel involved, fully understand the part they play in securing improvements and are supportive of the actions planned. You have identified ways that middle leaders can be even more effective. You have created a culture that is supporting the development of new ideas.

Safeguarding is effective.

- You carefully weave the agreed safeguarding policies and procedures into all aspects of the school's work. Pupils' demonstrate a good understanding of safety as it features prominently in the school's new curriculum. Parents, staff and pupils report a culture that is safe and secure. The well-being of every pupil is of paramount importance to adults and they are vigilant in their approach to pupils' welfare. All staff take great care of the pupils and know their individual needs exceptionally well. Staff act as highly effective role models for pupils in the way they talk, act and behave towards each other.
- You and all staff follow up concerns diligently to ensure pupils receive the support they need. Your records and analyses are thorough and show your emphasis on ensuring all issues are fully resolved. Staff are well trained in identifying pupils who are at risk from physical or emotional neglect and abuse. Helpful flow charts in every classroom ensure that all staff know the steps to take if they have a concern. This enables them to act swiftly. You routinely keep your colleagues trained and updated about current practice. Recent training on the government's 'Prevent' strategy has provided you with a good understanding of how to keep pupils safe from the risk of exposure to extreme views.

Inspection findings

- Middle leaders are playing an active role in the developments at the school. They work alongside you, using a range of indicators based on evidence from lesson observations, work scrutiny, and pupil and parental feedback to make informed views of their areas of responsibility. These internal indicators are regularly checked with the local authority school improvement adviser to verify the accuracy of judgements. You have a clear understanding of the importance of middle leaders in driving improvements. You have devised detailed plans for their development and to increase their impact further. These plans include improving their skills of conducting lesson observations, analysing pupils' work and providing developmental feedback to staff.
- Leaders hold teachers to account for the progress of pupils in their classes through termly one-to-one progress meetings. Subject leaders identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind during regular 'cognition and learning surgeries' and provide them with immediate support. Teachers understand your high expectations, are rising to the challenge and continually look to improve their practice. Teaching assistants also play an important role in checking pupils' progress and as soon as pupils catch up they are returned to their class. Your investment in training for teaching assistants ensures that all pupils, regardless of when and by whom they are taught, receive good-quality support. Consequently, teaching assistants feel valued and able to contribute to school developments.
- Following the drop in standards of writing in 2015, you successfully adapted and modified your curriculum. Teachers skilfully link subjects through interesting and stimulating experiences and topics such as 'Chocolate'. This exciting range of activities is having a positive impact on pupils' engagement with, and attitudes to, writing. It is also having a number of other benefits. Pupils' broader cultural understanding is being enhanced well, for example by learning about how precious water is in parts of Africa. The curriculum is also making an effective contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being. Activities place a strong emphasis on resilience and perseverance through 'personal learning goals'. Pupils' good behaviour, enthusiasm and positive outlook towards learning make a strong contribution to their good progress.
- The teaching of writing is developing pupils' knowledge of different text types and genres well. Work in pupils' books and displays around the school confirms that pupils are writing more, writing confidently and making good progress. Teachers develop pupils' use of vocabulary well. Pupils' core skills are being developed across a range of subjects. However, you are aware that teachers do not always use your assessment system to ensure that activities build systematically on pupils' prior knowledge, understanding and skills, such as their use of punctuation or how they structure sentences.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) and early reading is effective. Teachers ensure pupils' knowledge of particular sounds is secure.

Year 1 pupils' growing confidence in using their phonic knowledge is evident in their writing when they attempt to blend more complex sounds.

- Governors provide an appropriate balance of both support and challenge to the school. They share your ambition to improve the school further. They consider how effective they are and carefully ensure that there is a good balance of skills among board members. Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are aware of the next steps required in their own development. For example, they do not question school leaders in sufficient detail about the impact of pupil premium expenditure on raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- middle leaders bring about greater improvement in their areas of responsibility
- teachers raise pupils' achievement in writing by using the available assessment information to plan writing activities that effectively build on pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding
- the governing body checks more closely the precise expenditure and impact of pupil premium funding on raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Wiltshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Richard Light
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the assistant headteacher, staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors. I accompanied you on visits to lessons and together we looked at work in pupils' books during these visits. I looked at the survey results from 'Parent View', the online questionnaire for parents. I met with a group of pupils from Years 3 and 4 to discuss their work and gain their views of the school. I evaluated the accuracy of your self-evaluation and reviewed a range of other documentation. I checked the effectiveness of your safeguarding arrangements and recruitment information.