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Ms L Priddle
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Ms Priddle

Short inspection of Clifton Hampden Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 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 your school was judged to be good in November 2010.

This school continues to be good.

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

Clifton Hampden Church of England Primary School is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school but one that is expanding steadily. Parents speak very highly of the school, particularly the high levels of care and guidance that you and your staff provide to all pupils. Parents remark that their children flourish because teachers nurture and support individual needs well, foster high levels of self-assurance and make learning fun. One parent encapsulated the views of many, stating: 'This is a great school with a great teaching staff who care passionately about their pupils.'

You demonstrate high levels of ambition for the pupils of Clifton Hampden School. The school's mantra, 'Here every child has the opportunity to excel', is at the heart of your work. Your thorough self-evaluation of the school's performance illustrates your steadfast determination to become even better. Governors and senior leaders keep school performance under scrutiny, regularly discussing how well pupils are learning. However, a wider perspective on how well specific groups are achieving, such as boys, is required in order to sharpen the school's work and accelerate progress further. Equally, improvement plans, including those of middle leaders, would benefit from sharper measures in order to evaluate success.

Many pupils make good progress and achieve the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in some year groups boys are making slower progress in mathematics than girls. Since the previous inspection, standards have continued to rise, particularly in writing. Although standards were lower in Key Stage 1 in 2015 than in the past, pupils made excellent progress from low starting points. Standards at the end of Reception are high. In 2015, all children met the requirements for a good level of development at the end of their first year in school.

At the time of the previous inspection, inspectors identified some weaknesses in the use of assessment to support learning.

Because of your work:

- The school is heralded as a leading light in the Abingdon partnership due to its influence on the development of its approach to implementing assessment without levels. Your work has been instrumental among the Abingdon family of schools. The local authority is rightly full of admiration for how well you have driven this aspect, sharing your expertise open-handedly with colleagues.
- Pupils understand how to improve their work and are clear what their next steps to achieve success are.
- Excellent use of assessment is a strong feature of early years. Teachers waste no time in getting to know the individual needs of children and ensuring their needs are appropriately met.

Since January 2016, you have become executive headteacher of another small, local primary school, Culham Primary School, splitting your time equally between the two.

Collaborative working is at an early stage. Staff are excited at the opportunities that lie ahead.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and procedures are rigorous.

The school makes appropriate checks on all adults, including volunteers, to confirm their suitability to work with children. You and your staff are fully aware of the Government's guidance, *'Keeping children safe in education'*, and meet your responsibilities well.

You have ensured that attention to detail characterises the school's arrangements for keeping everyone safe. For example, the comprehensive signage around the school site is clear and easily understood. This ensures that visitors know where the school entrance is, despite being slightly hidden from view.

Pupils feel safe. They are clear about how to evacuate the Victorian building in the event of a fire drill. They appreciate the secure fencing, noting that it 'keeps

strangers out'. They feel well cared for and say that adults are vigilant and alert to their needs. They know how to keep themselves safe on the internet.

Governors keep a sharp oversight, assuring themselves that statutory processes are adhered to systematically. They contribute particularly well to this aspect of the school's work. Parents and pupils are unanimous in their view that the school is a safe place to be.

Inspection findings

- Teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations and ensure that work is appropriately challenging for pupils of all abilities. Pupils grapple appropriately with new concepts and display high levels of satisfaction when they master a new skill. Occasionally in mathematics some pupils, particularly boys, are less secure in their understanding of new calculation strategies. As a result, they find it too hard to apply what they have learned to problem-solving activities. When this is the case, their progress slows. Nevertheless, pupils say that someone will always help if they are stuck. They are quick to sing the praises of their teachers, particularly for the support they receive.
- Standards in writing have risen. All pupils make good progress and an increasing proportion make rapid gains. Pupils like writing and talk insightfully about how their skills have developed steadily from a very young age. Pupils have plentiful opportunities to write for a range of purposes, although they say that writing stories is their favourite. You and the staff are using the school's new assessment system well to keep track of how well pupils are learning.
- The work of middle leaders is developing effectively. Middle leaders now have greater involvement in planning improvements. Closer monitoring of school performance in English and mathematics is strongly evident. Middle leaders' work is developing and they are increasingly able to evaluate fully the difference they are making. The school is becoming outward-looking. The very recent collaborative partnership with another school is also opening doors for staff to learn from one another's expertise.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled and provide very effective support, particularly to pupils who have special educational needs or disability. They ask probing questions that encourage pupils to reason and think deeply. Teaching assistants are skilful at boosting pupils to have a go, try their best and achieve a suitable level of independence in learning. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good and sometimes rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children get off to a cracking start in their Reception year. The outdoor area is used well and opportunities to learn through play are first class. Children quickly develop their number, early reading and writing skills because of the well-crafted and appealing menu of activities. For example, children could confidently match number bonds to 10 when undertaking a number treasure hunt, revelling in joy at their success. Many make rapid gains in the acquisition of their basic skills. In 2015, all children achieved a good level of development and were well prepared for the challenges of Year 1.
- Parents, too, are unanimous in their praise for the excellent start their

children make to school life. One parent commented, 'We are extremely happy with our child's transition from pre-school into school. Our child is made to feel safe and suitably encouraged to join in in all activities, challenged in a positive way and gaining confidence in all areas of learning. He loves going to school every day and cannot wait to share what he has learnt and experienced.'

- The curriculum is planned thoughtfully to maximise opportunities to extend pupils' perspectives and capture their interest. Visits such as a recent school council trip to present a fundraising cheque to Oxfordshire Animal Sanctuary served to inspire pupils effectively. Pupils talk animatedly about the abundance of special days and the lasting impact these experiences bring to bear.
- Pupils forge strong friendships across the age ranges. Older pupils are particularly proud of the help and guidance they offer to the youngest pupils. There are few incidents of poor behaviour and parents and pupils agree that bullying does not happen. This is because minor disagreements are, as parents assert, 'nipped in the bud quickly'. Pupils have a positive outlook and understand the value of friendship. Teachers are skilful at ensuring that pupils grow socially, emphasising good manners and high levels of respect. One pupil commented, 'Our teachers always encourage us to be friendly towards one another.'
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils put into practice the values such as friendship, respect and tolerance in their everyday lives. They are quick to help one another in learning and prompt to offer praise. Music education contributes well to pupils' cultural and social development; pupils at Clifton Hampden love to sing with great gusto!
- Transition arrangements are top-notch. Pupils leave Clifton Hampden Primary School with high levels of confidence and self-esteem along with the reading, writing and mathematics skills needed for success. They are extremely well equipped for life in Year 7 in much larger schools. Parents talk fervently about how well pupils settle into much larger secondary schools, attributing this to good levels of self-assurance and self-belief instilled while at primary school.
- Further activities such as a recent election where pupils presented their manifestos or the Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 visit to the Houses of Parliament give pupils' rich experiences of modern British values in action. They thrive on opportunities to voice their opinions and influence the world around them.
- A compact outdoor space has not limited the variety of sporting activities on offer to pupils. Pupils are highly appreciative of the chance to represent the school in competitive events. They are proud to have a school badminton and football team. School clubs are popular and well attended by pupils.
- Governors offer good support to you and the staff. They are proud of the school's heritage and the improvements that they have witnessed first-hand over time. Many governors have a long association with the school and they hold a deep-seated commitment to ensuring that it continues to flourish. They rightly devote time to monitoring the work-life balance of you and your staff, checking carefully the well-being of all.

- The school's values are promoted widely and pupils attach genuine meaning to the spiritual and moral aspects of their education. They enjoy assemblies and activities that promote a deeper understanding of the school's, 'value of the month'. For example, in a recent activity to explore trust, pupils were able to feel for themselves the essence of trust by playing the role of guide dog and handler.
- Attendance is high. Pupils enjoy coming to school. A welcoming atmosphere pervades the school. Whether arriving at the school's breakfast club or settling into class, pupils and parents always receive a warm welcome.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- senior leaders and governors explore in greater depth how well specific groups of pupils, such as boys, are learning in order to accelerate improvement
- middle leaders measure the impact of their actions on accelerating pupils' progress
- boys make more rapid progress in mathematics by ensuring that tasks are well matched to starting points.

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Farr
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, six pupils in Key Stage 2 and three members of the governing body, including the chair. I also met with a representative of the local authority. We observed learning in seven lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. I took account of 34 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also took account of the views of eight members of the school team who responded to the online survey for staff. I observed pupils' behaviour on arrival at school and during the day. I spoke with 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.