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24 March 2016

Mrs M Kelly
Headteacher
Ashleworth Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mrs Kelly

Short inspection of Ashleworth Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 March 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 March 2011.

This school continues to be good.

Despite the school experiencing recurrent changes in leadership, the good quality of education in the school has been maintained since the previous inspection. The strong community spirit of the school has been pivotal in ensuring that the pupils received the best possible learning experiences during this period.

Your leadership has been instrumental in driving forward improvements and further raising the school's aspirations for the pupils it serves. You are well supported by governors, the local authority and the diocese. Governors describe how you have taken the school by 'the scruff of the neck', quickly identifying weaknesses and working hard to eradicate them. This is resulting in pupils making stronger progress in their learning. However, while pupils are making good progress, you are not satisfied and believe that they can make even better progress especially in writing and mathematics. Action plans are in place with next steps clearly identifying what needs to be done, by whom, how and by when, to further accelerate and improve pupils' outcomes.

The school has a caring and friendly ethos which prides itself on 'bringing learning to life' for its pupils. The core values of trust, friendship and perseverance are firmly rooted in the school, where all are valued for their individuality. The work of the school is underpinned by a strong religious ethos. It has a family feel to it and is

very much at the heart of the local community. This is what appeals to the parents who are delighted that their children attend this small village school. One parent described the school as, 'an amazing school with amazing pastoral support'. The pupils are happy. They describe how they appreciate the care and guidance they receive and the friendships they form throughout the school. They are pleased they attend a small school where they feel nurtured and safe. However, you and your governors are acutely aware that further work needs to be undertaken to ensure that pupils are well prepared for living in modern Britain, especially aspects of cultural diversity. Work is already underway to bring about these improvements swiftly.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your staff and governors place the highest priority on the safeguarding of all pupils. Robust systems are in place to maintain pupils' safety and well-being, and are rigorously implemented and adhered to. There is a strong culture of safety and security within the school. You have a clear understanding of the need to protect pupils from all possible risks. You ensure that staff and governors receive high-quality training and regular updates on keeping pupils safe.

Pupils describe how they can share any worries they may have with an adult. They welcome the introduction of the 'worry box' and appreciate how rapidly their worries are heard and resolved. They comment that their school is a happy and friendly place to be, and where they are well cared for.

Inspection findings

- You lead the school with steel and determination. You make no apology for demanding and expecting the best from staff and pupils. Consequently, weaknesses identified are quickly tackled. You, along with your governors, demonstrate a strong capacity for further improvement.
- You have a committed staff. They share your aspirations to make learning purposeful and enjoyable for pupils to ensure that they make the best progress possible. You are outward looking and seek out good practice within the partnership with Churcham Primary School and the wider cluster of schools.
- Governance is strong. Governors have a good understanding of the school's performance. They visit regularly and are highly committed and ambitious for the school's continued improvement. Minutes from their meetings confirm that they receive high-quality information from you. Nonetheless, they also regularly challenge you for further improvement.

- Although the number of pupils in each year group is too small to make reliable national comparisons, it is clear from the checks that you make that a significant number of pupils are currently making at least good progress in all areas of their learning.
- Pupils are making strong progress in reading. As a result of the actions taken following a review in the teaching of phonics, current outcomes are showing a strong improvement. You ensure that reading has a high profile across the school. By carefully targeting those pupils who need additional support, you are making sure that they are catching up quickly with their peers. 'Your child and reading' provides parents with a wealth of information to support young readers at home. This focus is driving up standards and pupils are developing a love of reading. This was confirmed during the inspection. Pupils of all ages are developing their skills and read with confidence, accuracy and enjoyment.
- At the time of the previous inspection, the school was asked to make sure that pupils were given the opportunity to write at greater length and to edit and revise their work. Inspection evidence shows that pupils have good opportunity to do this, especially in their English lessons. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 have been writing a story called 'The tiny seed'. Pupils' writing clearly shows their good development in the use of their vocabulary choices and their growing understanding of grammar, spelling and punctuation. They welcome the opportunity to improve their work. Pupils describe how the teacher talks to them and shows them individually what they need to improve in order to be successful. Pupils really appreciate the time given for them to respond to feedback as it helps them make better progress.
- The focus on mathematics is resulting in pupils currently making better and more sustained progress in this subject. The teaching of mathematics is strong with teachers using their good subject knowledge to support pupils in their learning. Teachers target their questioning well to probe and deepen pupils' understanding. For example, during a Key Stage 1 lesson, Year 2 pupils were confidently using their knowledge of addition to successfully complete calculations. They were able to demonstrate their resilience by not giving up when provided with more challenging questions.
- Class sizes are small and teachers make best use of this by setting individual and group challenges to best meet differing needs, including those few pupils identified as having special educational needs or disability. It is evident that teachers have increased expectations of pupils, both in the quality of pupils' work and the standards of presentation. Consequently, this is impacting positively on the progress pupils are making, which is improving quickly.
- You monitor the attendance of pupils rigorously to check that all pupils attend school regularly. Any gaps in attendance are carefully explored and actions put in place to support parents.

- Pupils are extremely happy at the school, which is reflected in their regular attendance. They describe how they form strong relationships and seldom fall out. For example, older pupils act as buddies ensuring that playtimes and lunchtimes are enjoyable experiences. Consequently, behaviour during these times is good and reports of bullying extremely rare.
- Pupils have a strong sense of community spirit and show great respect for each other. They fully adhere to school rules and know what types of behaviour are not acceptable or tolerated. Pupils and parents feel part of a community which is enriched by its strong Christian distinctiveness. For example, pupils welcome the opportunity to lead in acts of worship. Principles of democracy are taught by voting pupils onto the school council. This council is used well to hear the views of the pupils. Suggestions made are carefully listened to and adopted where appropriate. However, pupils' broader understanding of life in modern Britain needs strengthening. Pupils are not secure in their knowledge and understanding of the diversity of living in Britain and what this means for them as individuals.
- Parents are enormously supportive of the school. They are appreciative of the hard work and dedication of you and your staff. You were described by one parent as an 'incredibly enthusiastic lady; I am not sure how she does it.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- effective leadership of teaching remains a priority to enable the proportion of pupils making outstanding progress to further increase, especially in writing and mathematics
- pupils have a greater knowledge and understanding of what it is like to live in modern Britain.

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

Yours sincerely

Jen Southall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

At the time of the inspection, the school was working in a formal partnership with Churcham Primary School, with you as headteacher leading both schools. The governing body is working closely with the local authority and diocese to secure the future direction of the school.

Since 2012, there have been no pupils in Year 6. Consequently, there have been no published end of Key Stage 2 data. There are currently four pupils in this year group. There are no disadvantaged pupils in the school and no pupils identified as having special educational needs or disability in Reception or Key Stage 1.

During the inspection, I met with you, three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and an officer from the local authority. Together, you and I visited each class to observe teaching and to look at pupils' work. I spoke with parents at the start of the day. I considered the results from Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View. Informally, I spoke to pupils during the day to gather their views about the school. I also considered the responses from the pupil and staff online questionnaire. I appraised the accuracy of your evaluation of the school's performance and your school development plan along with other documentation. I checked the effectiveness of your safeguarding arrangements and your work to ensure the regular attendance of your pupils.