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Mrs S Severn
Hope Brook Church of England Primary School
Church Road
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Dear Mrs Severn

Short inspection of Hope Brook 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 May 2011.

This school continues to be good.

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

- You provide strong leadership and a determination to ensure that every pupil receives a high-quality education. You are never complacent and continually seek well-planned and innovative ways to improve the school. Your staff and governors share in your vision and drive to improve standards further. Teachers continually strive to plan engaging and interesting lessons to ensure that every pupil achieves their potential. Parents appreciate the commitment to the school shown by you all. 'The children have a high regard and respect for the teachers,' and 'My children look forward to going to school' are typical of parents' views received during the inspection.
- You and your leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance. You urgently tackle areas for improvement identified through your rigorous self-evaluation. Leaders work closely with your school improvement adviser to continually check the school's performance and to challenge themselves and the staff to improve further. For example, you were not satisfied with pupils' outcomes in writing at the end of the last academic year, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Following a full analysis of standards in this subject across the school, you and your subject leader identified the need to improve pupils' non-fiction writing. You and your leaders have taken immediate steps to tackle this. Work in books across all classes confirms that teachers are giving pupils engaging and interesting opportunities to write at length in many

subjects. As a result, pupils are making faster progress and making up lost ground.

- All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The school provides a calm and well-ordered learning environment where pupils feel safe and secure. Some pupils arrive at Hope Brook during the school year, including those who speak English as an additional language. However, the school's strong, inclusive ethos ensures that pupils settle quickly and feel part of this 'family'. The school's Christian values underpin all aspects of its work. Pupils learn to 'Be safe, be healthy and show respect'.

Safeguarding is effective.

- You and your governors are uncompromising in your determination to keep pupils safe. The governor with responsibility for monitoring safeguarding frequently checks that agreed procedures are implemented and working effectively. A recent review carried out by the local authority confirmed the high quality of your safeguarding practice. Leaders ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding so that pupils are safe and feel secure when they are at school. Staff care deeply about each pupil and follow up concerns assiduously. In particular, you support vulnerable pupils and those new to the school, using the services of outside agencies effectively to maintain pupils' welfare and safety. As a result, the school is a harmonious community where pupils and staff say that they feel valued and enjoy coming to school.
- The governors ensure that all staff are recruited safely. In addition, the school's safeguarding records confirm that all training is up to date. This includes training on the government's 'Prevent' strategy to ensure that staff understand how to protect pupils from the risk of extreme views. Information given to pupils in assemblies also strengthens their understanding of what to do if they feel unsafe or insecure. The 'worry box' is used effectively to address individual worries or concerns. Consequently, pupils say, 'Our teachers listen to us and help us if we are worried'.

Inspection findings

- As a result of your relentless drive to improve the school, you and your staff and governors identified that standards in writing dipped in 2015. You have acted swiftly to get to the heart of the problem and to implement the strategies needed to bring about improvement. For example, the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is delivered consistently by well-trained teachers and teaching assistants. No learning time is lost during these daily sessions. Children in the Reception class increasingly use their knowledge of letters and sounds to read and write simple words and sentences. Pupils in Year 2 read with confidence and with developing comprehension skills. Work in pupils' books confirms the teaching of reading is helping pupils to improve the quality and quantity of their writing.
- The quality of teaching is a strong feature of the school. Teachers rigorously

check pupils' learning in lessons and carefully plan tasks, building on what pupils already know, understand and can do. Teachers skilfully listen to, carefully observe and question pupils during lessons to check their learning. They reshape tasks and explanations in response to their pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils learn well and their knowledge of the subject being taught deepens quickly and securely. This approach enables teachers to quickly spot pupils with misunderstandings or gaps in their learning. On these occasions, leaders swiftly implement well-targeted support to ensure that pupils catch up and deepen their learning further. In addition, the school provides precisely targeted support for individual pupils and for small groups of pupils in English and mathematics. As a result, pupils develop a wide range of skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress is good in all year groups and pupils' work confirms that they achieve well over time in relation to their starting points. Currently, teachers do not routinely observe each other to share good practice more widely.

- Subject leaders use their strong subject knowledge to check standards and to support colleagues to improve teaching and learning. They have an in-depth understanding of learning and progress of the pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and the most-able across the school. As a result, they swiftly identify gaps in learning and understanding as well as areas for improvement. For example, the school's focus on improving spelling has improved the standard of writing.
- The quality of work in pupils' books, including in 'topic books', strongly improves over time. Subject leaders enthusiastically embrace training provided by the local authority to develop their own understanding and skills in monitoring the quality of teaching and standards in their subjects. Leaders give precise, accurate feedback to teachers to ensure that their teaching continues to improve. As a result of the improving quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and progress are good.
- The early years leader has built highly effective links with the on-site pre-school to ensure that children are ready to start school. Parents praise the arrangements for their children when they start school. During the inspection, they stated that their children settled quickly and are very happy in the Reception class. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points and are on track to reach a good level of development.
- The school has tackled the demands of the new National Curriculum with determination. You view the required changes as an opportunity to adapt and to modify your work to provide more interesting and stimulating experiences for pupils. In particular, teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve in mathematics. Their plans, and work in pupils' books, confirm that a growing proportion of pupils are now working at age-related expectations. Those capable of further challenge are being encouraged to tackle harder work. Consequently, standards in mathematics are rising quickly. Pupils are making good progress and achieving well.

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have reviewed the school's approach to providing marking and feedback to pupils to continue to raise attainment in English and mathematics. Leaders continue to refine this work further. Pupils reflect on their learning across a range of subjects, which is helping them to understand how to improve their work. However, this approach is not yet implemented consistently across the school to deepen and broaden all pupils' learning further.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They work hard, co-operate and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Consequently, attendance is very good. The school's innovative, creative curriculum inspires pupils to learn and is extending the breadth and depth of their learning. Teachers use challenging and interesting topics in Years 1 and 2, such as China and William Shakespeare, to engage and motivate pupils to learn. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 examined Nelson Mandela's text, 'Long Walk to Freedom', as a stimulus for high-quality discussion and writing. In addition, teachers plan opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths and cultures. In discussions, pupils demonstrated an understanding of British values, such as respect and tolerance for one another. They relish opportunities to raise money for charities to help others. They also spoke enthusiastically about the role of the school council in planning the forthcoming 'World Book Day' and the book sale to raise extra school funds. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively.
- 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 meetings confirm that they receive high-quality information from the headteacher. Nonetheless, they also challenge leaders for further improvement. Governors link with subject leaders to increase their understanding of standards further. However, their monitoring activities do not yet focus sufficiently on the learning and progress of groups, including disadvantaged pupils and the middle attaining pupils, to precisely check on their progress. Leaders and governors demonstrate a strong capacity for further improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers routinely observe strong teaching in the school to improve their practice even further
- monitoring activities focus precisely on, and record, the learning and progress of all groups of pupils so that leaders can drive improvements further
- the school's approach to providing feedback to pupils is developed to deepen their learning even further.

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

Catherine Leahy
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, other leaders and members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I spoke with pupils throughout the inspection, including in lessons, at breaktime and lunchtime. In addition, I met with a representative from the local authority. I scrutinised the quality of pupils' work in their books and heard pupils read. I also took account of nine responses to the staff questionnaire and 25 responses by parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View. I also took account of parents' views submitted by text. I looked at a wide range of evidence relating to safeguarding, the quality and accuracy of assessment information and the school's analysis of attendance and behaviour records.