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Julian Rose  
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Dear Mr Rose

### **Short inspection of West Chiltington Community First School**

Following my visit to the school on 1 March, 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 December 2010.

### **This school continues to be good.**

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have worked tirelessly to build a creative, successful learning community. Leaders, staff, parents and carers work well together to promote pupils' achievement. Parents rightly hold you in very high regard. They value your personal knowledge of every pupil and family and your friendly welcome, every day. The way you engage parents and staff in thinking deeply about how to help children learn is a distinctive feature of the school. Parents value opportunities to discuss educational research with you, and the interesting links you make available on the school's website.

Your firm action to improve teaching, especially in Key Stage 1, reflects your determination to ensure excellent progress throughout the school. Your well-considered recruitment of teachers with a range of skills and experience has enriched the school's leadership and the staff team. The example you provide as the 'lead learner' in the school inspires all the staff to reflect on their own work and to debate creative ideas for teaching and learning. You ensure that staff receive continuous feedback on their work, with a programme of professional development well suited to their individual needs and the school's priorities for improvement.

Pupils are proud of their school. They attend well, behave well, show respect to all the adults and to one another, and take good care of the school and its resources.

Pupils enjoy lessons immensely. This helps pupils achieve well. Your imaginative use of additional government funding provides sporting and personal opportunities that boost pupils' confidence and their interest in learning.

During the last inspection, inspectors identified the need to develop mathematics teaching. Leaders have taken effective action so that all pupils, including the most able, achieve well. Pupils of all ages are now expected to think for themselves and confidently apply the skills that they learn to solve mathematical problems.

Pupils' achievement in reading remains a real strength of the school. You have correctly identified that pupils do not achieve so well in writing and phonics (letters and the sounds that they make), particularly in Reception Year and Key Stage 1. You and the English leader are working closely with teachers to address this issue, with early signs of improvement.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You ensure that pupils are kept safe and feel safe in school. You and governors ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met. You review and update policies regularly; all the school's staff are fully trained and alert to possible risks. Staff know procedures well. Full checks are made and recorded when any staff or volunteers are recruited, and for all visiting teachers and contractors.

All the adults in school know pupils well and the quality of care adults provide for individual pupils is striking. You and your staff go more than the extra mile to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils feel cherished. Supervision at social times is ample and attentive. A very small minority of parents and pupils responding to Ofsted's online surveys expressed a concern about bullying. Nevertheless, all the parents responding to the survey were confident that their children are safe and well cared for at school. Pupils I spoke with were absolutely clear that bullying very rarely happens and that adults step in promptly to resolve any concerns. Pupils are taught well about the risks of social media and about how to keep safe online. The school provides helpful guidance to parents about internet safety. Parents willingly play their part in keeping pupils safe by cooperating with your road safety policy at the beginning and end of the school day.

### **Inspection findings**

- You lead regular comprehensive reviews in every classroom. Governors and other leaders share with you in checking pupils' progress and the quality of pupils' work. Strengths in teaching are identified so that these can be shared. Aspects of teaching are clearly identified for further improvement, with relevant training and coaching provided promptly for staff. Teachers act promptly on any advice given. This review enthuses teachers about their work and drives constant improvement in teaching very effectively.
- Pupils start at the school with knowledge and skills which are at least typical for their age. Pupils rarely enter school with low levels of learning and some start

with clear strengths, particularly in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

- Pupils achieve well. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 5, most pupils have already attained standards expected nationally by the end of Year 6, particularly in reading and mathematics. This means pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education. Parents commented positively to me about the confidence their older children showed when starting at their next school.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is excellent. You promote reading throughout the curriculum so that pupils quickly become fluent readers and love reading. Teachers use texts cleverly to stimulate pupils' interest. Pupils enjoy reading books of all kinds. Year 5 pupils were proud to share with me their beautifully presented 'Endangered Encyclopaedia', produced together from their research. The extensive school library, designed by pupils with the help of parents and placed at the heart of the school, reflects the importance you give to reading.
- The mathematics leader ensures that pupils are taught well to build and apply their skills. Pupils' work books show frequent opportunities to solve mathematical problems, often in cooperation with others.
- You have rightly identified the need to improve pupils' achievement in phonics and writing during Key Stage 1, and to close gaps in some KS2 pupils' knowledge of spelling and grammar. In Year 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected score in the national phonics screening check has declined steadily. Pupils' achievement in writing at age seven in 2015 was notably lower than in reading and mathematics, particularly for the most-able pupils. Working closely with you, the recently appointed English leader is leading carefully planned improvements. There are some positive early signs of success, but the impact of this work is not yet seen in pupils' outcomes.
- The very small group of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) makes good progress. The close attention teachers pay to these pupils, and your careful use of additional funding, ensure that individuals' needs are met well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress. The special educational needs coordinator advocates strongly for these pupils and tracks their progress closely. As a result, their needs are met well through precisely targeted support.
- During the Reception Year, most children make good progress from their starting points, so the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development is above the national figure. Parents have confidence in their children's progress because of regular communication between home and school and the ready availability of staff. Sensibly, you plan to develop partnerships with pre-school settings to help improve the proportion of children, particularly boys, who achieve a good level of development in writing.
- Parents appreciate the clear information teachers provide about pupils' progress and how pupils' learning can be promoted at home.

- Pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum, including an increasingly wide range of sports and clubs, and opportunities to learn musical instruments. Teachers provide engaging experiences which reflect the wider world, for example, the inclusion of Bollywood dancing in the 2015 Christmas production, the recent visit to a Hindu temple in Crawley and the opportunity for all pupils last term to play percussion instruments from Indonesia. Your regular review of the curriculum ensures that this develops well to meet any new requirements.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Clear behaviour policies support pupils to respect others and to put right any mistakes. Values of respect and dignity are modelled consistently by all the adults and promoted well in assemblies. Through long-standing links with a school in Kenya and annual choices about which charities to support, pupils learn to think about and support other people.
- The local authority recognises the strengths in your leadership. You regularly lead work among local schools, currently to develop assessment methods for the revised national curriculum.
- Governance is a strength of the school. Aably led by the skilled chair, governors used their recent reconstitution as an opportunity to review and update their skills and ways of working. Governors are hardworking and committed to the success of every pupil and member of staff. Governors' policies are reviewed at regular intervals and kept up to date. Governors maintain their training efficiently, most recently about a current government initiative to prevent the radicalisation of children and families. Governors know the school increasingly well, through individual links to classes, their role in classroom reviews and meetings with leaders.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- improvements in the teaching of phonics and writing impact rapidly on pupils' writing achievement during Reception Year and Key Stage 1, particularly for boys and the most-able pupils.

Yours sincerely

Siân Thornton

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you to discuss your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and priorities for further improvement. Together we observed teaching in Reception class and in Years 1, 2, 3 and 5. I spoke with parents in the playground at the start of the day, analysed the 65 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and considered

one letter from a parent. I analysed 86 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey, met with a group of pupils and talked with some during lessons. The 18 responses to the Ofsted online staff survey were considered. I met with governors and spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority. A range of documents was scrutinised, including information about teaching and pupils' achievement, the school's self-evaluation summary and improvement planning, external reports on the school's performance, safeguarding checks and policies, and information on the school's website.