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Miss Hayley Clayton
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Clayton

Short inspection of St John's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 08 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 February 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 have developed a strong team and ignited their passion and commitment to strive towards outstanding education in the future. New and established staff are dedicated to improving the quality of learning for pupils. They have responded quickly and effectively to all of the improvements you have asked them to make. Parents value your leadership and appreciate your drive to provide an inspiring education for each and every pupil. They believe you are giving their children 'a great foundation for the future'.

The school community has flourished under your leadership, with a rising roll. You and your senior leaders know individual pupils well and give close attention to the progress they make. Pupils enjoy school and achieve well because leaders make successful improvements. Leaders have made positive changes, for example to the way that learning is organised in the early years so that more children secure a good level of development. In addition, improvements in the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) have ensured that this area of the school's work is highly successful.

Pupils' care and concern for others is evident in the way they express and share their views. Pupils can explain how values such as compassion, honesty and trust help them to work and play happily alongside one another. The school community

commits wholeheartedly to 'learning, loving and laughing together'.

When the school was previously inspected, leaders were praised for strengths in pupils' behaviour and welfare, including the ways in which pupils kept themselves safe. Inspectors asked leaders to raise attainment in writing by ensuring that pupils know how to improve their work. Leaders have addressed this effectively so that:

- pupils improve their writing between lessons because teachers show pupils what they need to do next
- opportunities to write are regular and plentiful across the curriculum, meaning that pupils' stamina for and interest in writing has increased across the school
- achievement in writing has strengthened for pupils, including the more able, so that is now significantly above the national average in early years and Key Stage 1.

You, your leadership team and governors are clear about which areas need further improvement, because your self-evaluation is forensic and accurate. You put effective plans in place to address any weaknesses and ensure that leaders have the time and skill to tackle these successfully. Senior leaders know that in the past, for example, some approaches to additional support were not fully successful. This included support for pupils who were disadvantaged and who also had complex special educational needs. These needs were not addressed swiftly enough and pupils lost ground through Key Stage 2. However, a number of changes have been made to bridge the gap between pupils' individual support and their whole-class work. Teachers now understand their accountability for all of the pupils in their class and work alongside support assistants, directing their work more effectively. Leaders know that there is more work to do so that pupils' achievement improves more quickly by the end of Key Stage 2.

Half of the teaching staff are new to the school this year. They have made a good start to their teaching career, because leaders have provided a high-quality induction programme. Teachers receive regular feedback from senior leaders which is helping them to quickly strengthen their practice. However, teachers' ability to pinpoint the most important next steps to rapidly increase pupils' progress is at an early stage and sometimes they do not stretch pupils' thinking, particularly in mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders take a rigorous and proactive approach to safety. Staff know how to keep pupils safe from harm because they receive regular, relevant training. All current policies reflect the most recent legislation and leaders ensure that new duties are understood well. Equally, staff recognise the crucial importance of following up any absence from school meticulously. Staff have been successful in increasing pupils' attendance. The school works tenaciously with external agencies to ensure that prompt and effective

actions are taken to support vulnerable children and families. Governors undertake their statutory responsibilities for safeguarding conscientiously and ensure that all arrangements are robust.

Inspection findings

- Your vision for the school is understood and shared by the whole school community. Parents confirm that you have brought positive changes to the school, which have enhanced their children's education; as a result, more pupils attend the school now than in the past.
- Your leadership inspires staff, particularly new leaders and teachers. You have increased the pace of transformation in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school. For example, in the early years, the language- and number-rich environment is well used by staff to stimulate children's thinking. Consequently pupils' early number and writing shows confidence and an accurate application of basic skills.
- Leaders systematically check the impact of the changes they make on the quality of teaching and learning. They hold regular meetings with staff to review the progress pupils are making so that they know which pupils need to catch up quickly. Staff are held to account for any pupil that does not make the progress that they should. There is a clear plan for all the additional support that pupils receive. Leaders have evaluated the impact of recent changes to support to check that it is making a difference. Effective work with external agencies is strengthening provision for pupils who have more than one additional need.
- Governors regularly review performance information to ensure that groups of pupils, such as the more able and those who are disadvantaged, are achieving as well as other pupils nationally. They provide robust challenge to leaders where this information shows that pupils' achievement is not as strong as it should be. They evaluate how changes made to the curriculum improve pupils' experience of learning by talking to them regularly to gather their views.
- The curriculum is inspiring pupils to learn. They are using practical experiences to strengthen their skills, knowledge and understanding in a range of curriculum areas. Recently, pupils took part in a bushcraft experience, making good use of the school's woodland area. Pupils created mock expeditions, linked to their theme of Antarctica, applying their new skills to make camps. In design and technology, pupils experimented with and selected from a range of stitching techniques to design and realise a penguin toy.
- Parents praise the work of the school, which makes them feel welcome and involved in their children's learning. They enjoy being able to celebrate their children's achievements across the curriculum through events such as visiting pupils' 'living museum', which displayed their work on Florence Nightingale, and their aboriginal art 'gallery'.
- Changes to the way in which teachers use assessment information to plan learning has ensured that most pupils' needs are met well. Pupils know how

to make improvements to refine, edit and correct their work and are encouraged to do so. However, teachers at times do not pinpoint precisely the most pressing gaps in pupils' learning. Equally, opportunities to stretch pupils' thinking are missed because teachers don't always know how to challenge them appropriately.

- Teachers who are new to the school are supported well to develop their practice through the coaching they receive from senior leaders. They know which aspects of teaching, learning and assessment they need to improve because the feedback they receive is timely and astute.
- Pupils' achievement at the end of early years and Key Stage 1 is above the national average. This is not the case at the end of Key Stage 2. In 2015, too few pupils made expected or better progress, particularly in mathematics. A small number of pupils who were disadvantaged and who had complex needs did not have effective support to make rapid progress across the key stage. In addition, a few pupils, who joined the school later in Key Stage 2, did not catch up quickly enough. Current performance information shows an encouraging picture, with nine out of ten of the Year 6 cohort on track to meet the expected standards for their age.
- Attendance is above the national average. Persistent absence is low. Individual pupils who do not attend as often as they should have been successfully supported and their attendance has risen accordingly.
- Pupils develop their sense of responsibility well and enjoy taking on a range of roles such as school councillor, house captain and play leader. Pupils enjoy receiving house points when they have met their target or have shown kindness to others. They take part in a range of after-school activities as well as visits. Pupils spoke animatedly about a recent trip to see the musical, 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' as part of a themed week. Music plays a key part in school life and a large number of pupils perform in the school's orchestra and choir.
- Behaviour is good throughout the school and children are proud of their school values. They are focused during their learning activities, listening well to adults and completing work carefully.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils who are disadvantaged and who have special educational needs, including those who join the school during Key Stage 2, receive support which rapidly improves their rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics
- teachers pinpoint gaps in pupils' learning precisely so that subsequent activities quickly strengthen pupils' accuracy and stretch pupils' thinking

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

Yours sincerely

Abbie Wilkinson

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, other leaders, pupils and four governors including the Chair of the Governing Body. I also met with a representative of the local authority. I visited all classes in the school with you, with the exception of Year 6, who were attending a residential visit. We observed the individual support pupils with complex needs receive in Year 5. I took account of 31 responses to the school's internal staff survey and 40 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, I considered 180 responses by pupils to their online survey and a further 39 written comments from parents. I spoke with a group of pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' checks on pupils' current performance, plans for additional support and intervention, the school improvement plan, leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and safeguarding policies and procedures. I looked at a sample of pupils' written work. I discussed your own evaluation of the schools' performance with you.