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Liz Stiddard
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Dear Ms Stiddard

Short inspection of West Chinnock Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 April 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.

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

You lead your school effectively and have the utmost respect of pupils, staff, governors and parents. Your vision and energy are sustaining the school's drive for excellence. You have a very accurate view of the school's strengths, pupils' achievement and areas for development. Governors are well informed of how the school is performing and provide leaders with an appropriate level of challenge and support. There is a determination that every pupil, whatever their need or background, is given the opportunity to be successful. The school is a harmonious place where everyone is treated with respect and consideration. The strong sense of community pervades the work of the school. Pupils genuinely enjoy coming to school.

You work successfully in a close and cohesive team with staff who share your determination to continue to improve; one parent commented on the 'staggering commitment of the teaching staff'. You make good use of the expertise across the two schools in your federation. For example, middle leaders from the two schools have worked successfully to implement the new national curriculum and develop the use of assessment to raise pupils' achievement. Staff training has led to raised aspirations. All staff are involved in contributing to school development planning and understand the part they play in securing improvements. You have ensured that

support staff are provided with good guidance and training, and are deployed effectively to 'make a difference'.

Children benefit from the improved outdoor provision in the early years; notably, one of the many activities they can now try is making pizzas and cooking them in the cob oven. Moreover, in partnership with parents and the wider community, leaders have expanded the outdoor learning facilities for all pupils. Pupils are genuinely proud of their school. Members of the school council demonstrate astute decision making in their use of funds to develop areas in the school. They also demonstrate a good understanding of democracy in the way they take account of other pupils' views before making decisions.

You and your predecessor have ensured that the school provides a good curriculum with a superb range of enrichment activities that successfully develop a friendly and inclusive school community. Pupils fully appreciate the clubs available to them, including chess, canoeing, tennis, gardening and 'imagineering'. As well as attending clubs, older pupils develop their leadership skills when taking responsibility to run and organise bird watching or dance clubs, for example. Parents who responded to the questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about the school's extra-curricular activities and commented on how pupils 'have the opportunity to shine both academically and socially'.

Pupils' behaviour and conduct is exceptional. Their excellent attitudes towards their learning have contributed to the high standards they achieve by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Older pupils say that they feel confident and appreciate the kind, supportive nature of the staff at the school. They are fiercely proud of their school and fervently enjoy their learning.

The previous inspection report highlighted the need to raise standards of writing in key stage 1. The strategies you have adopted are proving successful, although more needs to be done to help younger pupils to develop their writing skills.

Safeguarding is effective.

- All involved in the school community are deeply committed to keeping pupils safe. You make sure all necessary checks are made to confirm that those who work with children are suitable to do so. Training for safeguarding and child protection is up to date, regular and enables staff and governors to fulfil their duties. Written records provide a high degree of reassurance in the way incidents are identified immediately and tackled thoughtfully. Pupils are knowledgeable about matters of safety through activities planned in the curriculum. Staff at the school provide high levels of professional care and ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. Their strong teamwork ensures that information is shared appropriately and acted upon where necessary. Good working relationships with external agencies support the work you do to promote the well-being of all your pupils.
- Parents are confident that members of staff know their children well and keep a close eye out for any concerns. Parents speak particularly positively about the school's strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. The

school promotes pupils' positive behaviour, where respect and courtesy are the norm.

Inspection findings

- Your robust approach to checking and improving attendance is working. Close liaison with the educational welfare officer and family liaison worker ensures that pupils and their families are supported to improve their attendance. Records of attendance are detailed and meticulously maintained. You have raised the profile of the importance of regular attendance. Issuing 'penalty notices' has been effective in reducing the proportion of pupils who are absent on holiday during term time. Pupils' attendance is now in line with the national average.
- By the time pupils leave in Year 6, the proportion reaching and exceeding the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics is above the national average; on this measure, the school is in the top 1% of all schools nationally. Work in books confirms that pupils in key stage 2 are producing high-quality writing across the curriculum. For example, pupils' science books include detailed accounts of practical investigations where pupils are testing out a hypothesis and reaching well-evidenced conclusions.
- There have been improvements in pupils' writing in key stage 1. For example, pupils are using their better phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) knowledge to spell more accurately when writing. Younger pupils have also improved their use of punctuation and grammar. However, several younger pupils are not fully confident in producing longer pieces of writing beyond a few sentences; they do not display a secure and confident grasp of the features of narrative writing.
- Working with other schools is improving teachers' skills and accuracy when assessing pupils' progress and attainment in key stage 2 so that pupils of all abilities make rapid progress. There is not yet the same degree of precision or understanding of the developmental steps from the early years to key stage 1, particularly for more-able pupils. Although cohorts are particularly small, fewer than average achieve at the very highest levels by the end of Year 2.
- Teachers in the early years make good use of the information provided from pre-school settings to ensure that children have a smooth start to school. The early years team of staff know the children very well and make good use of observations of children's learning to plan activities to engage their interest. The activities they plan support the children's development across all aspects of learning. For example, children returning from a 'welly walk' during the inspection confidently showed photographs taken on a digital camera and explained whether objects were natural or man-made. Carefully targeted questioning from the teaching assistant stretched pupils' thinking to consider whether the 'big things seen were heavier than the smaller things'. Attainment at the end of the early years has remained above the national average.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability are extremely well supported at the school. Carefully crafted teaching together with the intense determination of staff to remove any barriers to learning supports pupils in

developing their confidence and overcoming challenges. The leader for special educational needs helps teaching staff in planning and carrying out individual support packages to meet pupils' needs. Prompt advice is sought from local authority specialist advisers and meticulous records are kept to check on the success of actions taken. This highly effective work ensures that pupils make very good progress across all areas of learning by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers have a clear understanding of the steps of development, particularly for more-able pupils, to ensure that they make rapid progress from the early years to the end of key stage 1 so that more pupils reach the very highest standards by the end of Year 2
- pupils in key stage 1 develop their skills and confidence and produce stories that include the relevant features of narrative writing.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tracy Hannon
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, other senior and middle leaders, governors and two groups of pupils. I visited lessons, spoke to pupils in these lessons and scrutinised the quality of their work in books. I also considered documentary evidence related to the impact of the school's work, including safeguarding, attainment and progress, attendance and the use of pupil premium funding. I took into account the responses to surveys from two members of staff and 27 parents.