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Dot Patton
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Dear Mrs Patton

Short inspection of Dogmersfield Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 June 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 September 2011.

This school continues to be good.

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection, against a backdrop of significant changes. Four of the five class teachers, including the assistant headteacher, have joined the school since then, as have 10 of the 12 governors. You joined the school in April this year when the previous headteacher retired.

Leaders took effective action to develop teaching and learning further, particularly in writing, following the last inspection. With the exception of 2014, when outcomes for Year 6 pupils dipped below national figures, standards at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 have consistently been above the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in writing at age 11 has been in line with or above national figures. Stronger outcomes at the end of the early years provide a good base for further improvement.

The school is rightly proud of its Christian ethos and family atmosphere. Pupils' personal and social development and behaviour remain notable strengths of the school. They are friendly and respectful of each other, staff and visitors. Pupils of different ages learn and play together well. Almost all parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, often citing how well it nurtures their children and helps them to thrive, both academically and socially. Parents praise the dedication of the staff and the fact that they know pupils as individuals, which helps them to tailor support and challenge. Those I spoke to are confident that you will make the school even better and appreciate that you are listening to their views.

You have brought a fresh pair of eyes to the school and a determination that the school will be outstanding. You have already undertaken a detailed analysis of the school's strengths and identified where further improvements could be made. You know that work to improve the teaching of writing and mathematics needs to continue in order to meet the demands of the new curriculum and to ensure that standards are consistently as high as in reading. You are already building on efforts so far this year by working with teachers to trial new ways of structuring writing lessons and extending the range and type of texts that pupils experience. You feel that more could be done to explicitly promote British values. You have very recently set up whole-school meetings so that all pupils, not just the school council, are involved in making decisions. Plans are in place to add fairness, justice and goodness as topics in religious education and to increase opportunities for pupils to learn about the wider multicultural society that exists beyond the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school's statement that the health and safety of all children is of paramount importance is borne out in practice. Checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children are meticulous. The thorough induction of new staff and volunteers ensures that everyone is clear about their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. They know, and follow to the letter when needed, the actions to take and who to inform should they have any concerns. Staff training is up to date. Leaders are aware there is no room for thinking 'it wouldn't happen here'. All staff have had training on keeping children safe from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation and are fully aware of the possibilities of other specific safeguarding issues they might encounter.

Governors ensure the safety of the school site through regular health and safety checks. The school successfully mitigates the particular safety challenges posed by its location on a narrow lane. The 'kiss and drop' system allows those parents who drive their children to school to leave them safely with volunteers, avoiding any parking hazards. Staff are vigilant in providing a secure environment, from head counts at the end of each playtime to teaching pupils how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, alongside national changes to the curriculum and assessment. Good-quality teaching has been maintained and outcomes for pupils have been above average. More recently, leaders have made good use of links with local schools and the local authority adviser to benchmark the school's work, draw on expertise and share ideas for improvement.
- When the progress that pupils made during key stage 2 dipped in 2014, leaders unpicked the reasons carefully. They established that in addition to specific individual needs, there had been an issue with some pupils' attitudes to work in that particular cohort. Home visits for Year 6 were introduced to underline the importance of pupils working hard so as to achieve their best and be well prepared for secondary school. The success

of this strategy is evident in the 2015 results and in current Year 6 pupils' mature attitudes.

- You have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness and know what improvements are needed for it to be judged outstanding. You are well supported by the assistant headteacher. Staff are signed up to the priorities for further improvement because they have been involved in identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses. Subject leaders currently provide good support for colleagues and take responsibility for developments, for example assessment arrangements. They are not yet monitoring or being held to account for quality and standards in their subjects.
- Governors are rightly proud of the school's ethos and pupils' achievements. Ensuring that they appointed the right person as the new headteacher has taken much of their time this school year. By their own admission, although they do receive and discuss reports from leaders, their monitoring of the school's work has not been as rigorous as it could be. They know the impact additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has on their social and emotional development but are less clear about the links with academic progress. You and the chair of governors have reviewed ways of working so that governors will be more focused on school improvement from September, including links with subject leaders.
- The school's values of love, respect and courage are high-profile in and out of lessons and make a strong contribution to pupils' social, moral and spiritual development. Year 6 pupils take their responsibility to look after the youngest children very seriously, appreciating that they have to step back after a while to encourage confidence and independence. Pupils understand that one form of courage is being prepared to have a go at things they find difficult. Nevertheless, you feel there is room to improve their resilience still further.
- Children get off to a really good start in the early years. Teaching successfully captures their interest and imagination to move their confidence, skills and knowledge on in bounds by the end of their first year in school. There was a tangible enthusiasm for learning as I observed children writing notices to instruct people not to destroy clues, counting footsteps and researching and recording information, all with the aim of establishing the whereabouts of the missing orang-utan.
- Elsewhere in school I saw how teachers are carefully structuring writing lessons to systematically teach pupils the skills they need and encourage them to write at length. The humour of a particular author was really engaging older boys in trying to write in his style. The use of texts tackling issues such as slavery and immigration is developing pupils' empathy for others beyond their immediate experience.
- You are strengthening the 'keep up, not catch up' mantra that grew out of the 2014 results, making sure that any possible underachievement is identified as early as possible and appropriate actions taken to restore progress. You know that results in Year 2 will not be as good this year because pupils' learning has been disrupted. You have a clear action plan in place to get them back on track, which is being closely monitored.
- The gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates appear to be closing and in some cases their achievement is better than others. You are

well aware, however, that very small numbers mean that trends can be masked or skewed. For example, despite overall improvements, no disadvantaged pupils have attained the higher levels in writing at age seven or 11 in recent years. One of the school's priorities is to ensure that expectations of these pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are high enough and their progress as good as it can be.

- The proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have typically compared favourably with national figures. This year, the school has focused on ensuring that pupils reach new, higher age-related expectations. The school's information and pupils' work indicate that Year 6 outcomes against this measure should be strong. You acknowledge that the school does not currently monitor the most able pupils' achievement closely enough to be absolutely sure they are reaching their potential.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors' role in monitoring the school's work and holding senior and middle leaders to account is strengthened
- systems are in place to check that the most able pupils are identified early on and achieve as well as they possibly can
- the monitoring of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs is sharpened.

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. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alison Bradley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, with the assistant headteacher and other teachers, pupils and the chair of the governing body. You and I visited each class to see pupils learning, looked at a range of pupils' work in classrooms and sampled books to check on the accuracy of assessments. I had a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority and observed whole-school collective worship led by the vicar, who is also a governor. I took account of 84 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as speaking to a number of parents at the beginning of the school day. I evaluated a range of school documents, including information about pupils' achievement, records of leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning, and safeguarding policies, procedures and checks. We

discussed your own assessment of the school's effectiveness, the impact of the current school improvement plan and your plans for next school year.