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Sarah Newbury  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Newbury

### **Short inspection of Cleeve Prior CofE (Controlled) First School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 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 March 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are determined to ensure that pupils achieve well and become confident and caring individuals. Your unrelenting focus on securing the best for the pupils has enabled the school to recover successfully from a challenging time. Two out of the three classes in the school have been significantly affected by weaknesses in teaching and changes of class teachers. Staffing has stabilised and teaching is now stronger than in the past. You and other senior leaders have an honest and realistic view of the school's strengths and areas for development. You, the staff and governors are working together well and taking appropriate action in order to ensure that the school continues to improve.

Most of the parents I spoke with were complimentary about the positive atmosphere in the school. They acknowledge the improvements in teaching and the way in which staff take care of their children. The vast majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire were equally positive about all aspects of the school. One parent wrote, 'Cleeve has embraced my child and allowed him to fly and shine'.

At the time of the previous inspection, inspectors identified the need to improve the quality of teaching. You rightly recognised that inconsistencies in teaching were having a detrimental impact on pupils' achievement. With valuable support from the local authority, you took appropriate action to tackle the weaknesses in teaching.

You also arranged for staff to receive suitable training and support from local authority advisers and to learn from and work with leaders in other schools. These combined actions have had a strong impact in the school. Work in pupils' books and the school's own information show that current pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Many pupils are working at the standards expected for their age, and some beyond. However, you are not content with this. You acknowledge that more pupils are capable of reaching even higher standards, especially in writing and mathematics. The actions senior leaders are taking in response to this are relevant and are beginning to make a difference, with more pupils exceeding age-related expectations than previously.

Senior leaders were also asked to develop pupils' appreciation of different faiths and cultures following the last inspection. Through lessons, assemblies and visits to places of worship, pupils gain a secure understanding of different religions, beliefs and practices. During this inspection, pupils were especially positive about the visits and how these helped them to learn about different faiths and cultures. Pupils are respectful, tolerant and understanding of any differences. They learn and play together well. They are considerate of each other's views during discussions and they listen carefully to each other and adults.

It is proposed that the Cleeve Prior and two other local schools form a multi-academy trust by September 2016. The diocese of Worcester is the proposed sponsor. The headteachers from the three schools meet regularly and pupils from all three schools get together during sporting events. Members of the governing body are effectively overseeing the transition of the school to academy status.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are effective. You and the staff make sure that pupils are kept safe and that they learn how to keep themselves safe. Pupils told me that staff look after them and that they can talk to any of the adults in the school about any concerns they may have. All the parents I spoke with and those who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire confirmed that their children feel safe in school. Pupils understand, for instance, the importance of keeping safe online, riding bikes around the village with care and crossing the road safely.

Senior leaders and governors make sure that policies relating to safeguarding are regularly reviewed and meet the latest statutory guidance. They also make sure that all staff attend training regularly and know how to raise any concerns about pupils. You and the staff make every effort to get to know each pupil and to understand their unique story. There are currently 41 pupils in the school, and it is very evident that senior leaders know each pupil's learning and emotional needs really well. This extensive and detailed knowledge enables senior leaders to work well with other professionals and to secure the support that individual pupils and their families may need. This collaborative partnership between staff and other professionals makes a good and effective contribution to pupils' emotional health and their well-being.

## Inspection findings

- You provide strong leadership. You lead by example, provide teachers and teaching assistants with helpful guidance and take appropriate action when any issues are identified. You are skilfully supported by other senior leaders. Together, you are successfully making sure that teaching continues to improve and pupils' achievement continues to rise.
- When reviewing previously published information about pupils' achievement in the early years and in Year 2, I took account of the school's individual pupil information. This is because of the small number of pupils in Reception and Year 2 and the disproportionate impact this can have on overall figures. In Year 2 for instance, one pupil represented 9% of the group. In Reception, one child represented 20% of the group.
- The 2015 results reflect the impact of weaknesses in teaching, which have now been eradicated, and the impact of changes in class teachers. Last year, the majority of children started Year 1 with skills and knowledge that were typically below those expected for their age. In the Year 1 phonics check, the majority of pupils did not achieve the expected standard. Similarly, in Year 2, a number of pupils, especially girls, did not reach the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Your latest information and inspection evidence confirm that pupils' achievement is improving quickly.
- The school's own information indicates that almost all of the children currently in the early years are on track to start Year 1 with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. The activities that staff plan encourage the youngest children to learn a broad range of skills. During this inspection, the children were busy in the 'mud kitchen'. Staff deliberately created a menu that they knew would not inspire children. Their strategy worked because the children were clearly not interested, and decided to create their own. Some children counted accurately as they gathered ingredients from the wildlife area, a few started to cook and others worked on a new menu. The children eloquently described the changes they made to the menu, used their phonics knowledge to write down their ideas and worked together well to create their recipes. This activity successfully enhanced children's speaking, reading, writing, number and social development.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils currently in Year 1 are predicted to achieve the required standard in the phonics check this year. In Year 2, the majority of pupils are on track to reach the expected standard in reading and mathematics, with a few pupils attaining above this. Owing to previous weak provision, pupils in Year 2 still have some catching up to do with their writing. Although pupils have made accelerated progress in writing since September 2015, further action is required to help them reach the standards expected for their age. Pupils in Year 2 are receiving additional support with their writing.
- Work in pupils' books and the school's achievement information show that in key stage 2, pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics. Half of the pupils are projected to exceed the standards expected for their age by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 5.

- The actions taken to raise the achievement of pupils in reading are having a particularly beneficial impact across the school. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their new reading books, the extra help they receive with their reading and an online reading programme which encourages them to practise their reading skills. Pupils read with confidence and expression.
- Teachers use a suitable range of strategies and practical resources to help pupils acquire the necessary skills and knowledge in mathematics. Pupils, for example, use their knowledge of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division well to answer questions involving time, money and measurements. You acknowledge that the most able pupils and those who understand concepts quickly are not given sufficient opportunities to deepen their mathematical learning. This is preventing some pupils from reaching even higher standards in mathematics.
- Staff are taking effective action to ensure that attainment in writing does not lag behind that in reading and mathematics. Pupils enjoy writing because teachers make sure that the work they plan is interesting for boys and girls. Teachers also make sure that they place a strong emphasis on basic writing skills. These actions have already improved pupils' spelling and their use of grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. You have correctly identified the need to give pupils more opportunities to write so that they can practise and extend their writing skills.
- Senior leaders keep a careful check on the progress of every pupil in the school. Each half term, all staff meet to discuss the progress of each pupil. Following these discussions, you make sure that individuals receive the support they need. The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent well. This ensures that they engage fully in all aspects of school life. Your latest information shows that disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than in the past and that their progress is similar to that of their classmates. Your information also shows that there are no longer any significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls in the school.
- One pupil, reflecting the views of his peers, commented, 'learning is inspiring'. You and the staff have redesigned the curriculum so that it captures pupils' interests and their imagination. Staff make sure that every topic gives pupils the chance to learn through first-hand experiences. Pupils in Years 4 and 5, for instance, spoke enthusiastically about the Amazon rainforest topic. They confidently recalled information about the landscape, climate and the animals. They were particularly keen to tell me about the visitor who gave them the chance to learn about and touch rainforest creatures, such as a tarantula and a python.
- Pupils behave well. They are kind and caring towards each other. Pupils told me that behaviour of most pupils is good. They explained that one or two pupils can be silly on occasions; however, when this happens, the teachers act quickly and fairly. School records confirm that incidents of disruptive behaviour are rare and that staff take appropriate action when they occur.

- You have introduced a suitable range of incentives to encourage pupils to attend regularly. The school's information shows that the attendance of almost half of the pupils in the school has improved markedly since September 2015. This is because leaders are following up absences more rigorously and they are working more closely with families to promote regular attendance. Despite these improvements, the school's overall attendance figure remains below the average for primary schools. It is worth noting that a small number of pupils are regularly absent from school. Last year, for instance, there were only 49 pupils in the school and the small number with low attendance had a considerable impact on the overall published information about attendance. You are continuing to improve the attendance of all pupils, and in particular work with the small number of families whose children are persistently absent.
- The primary school physical education and sports funding makes a valuable contribution to pupils' physical development. A sports coach works alongside staff and successfully helps pupils to be fit and healthy. With assistance from the sports coach, a group of pupils known as the 'games organising crew' organises sporting competitions within the school. Pupils also have the chance to take part in competitions between local schools.
- Following the resignation of the previous chair of the governing body in December 2015, governors elected two governors to share this role. Members of the governing body have benefited from local authority training and governor update meetings organised by the diocese. Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Through regular visits to the school and meetings with staff, governors effectively hold leaders to account for pupils' achievement.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils reach even higher standards in mathematics and writing by making sure that teachers:
  - provide the most able pupils and those who understand concepts quickly with work that deepens their learning in mathematics
  - increase the opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their writing skills.
- leaders continue to work with the local authority and parents to encourage the small group of pupils who are persistently absent to attend school regularly.

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

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you and two other leaders. I also met with the chairs of the governing body and one other governor. I spoke informally to parents and pupils. You joined me on brief visits to all classes. I spoke to pupils about their learning. I looked at examples of pupils' mathematics, writing and topic books. I reviewed a range of documentation, including records relating to keeping pupils safe and information relating to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. I took account of 13 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff, and 10 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View.