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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Rupa Barson
Acting headteacher
Churwell Primary School
Westwood Side
Churwell Morley
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS27 9HR

Dear Mrs Barson

Short inspection of Churwell Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 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 January 2011.

This school continues to be good.

Since your appointment as co-headteacher in September 2015 and subsequent move to acting headteacher in January 2016, you have worked hard with staff and governors to improve the school further. Along with the acting deputy headteacher and other school leaders you have accurately identified the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. These are clearly outlined in the school's self-evaluation and development plan. The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and your staff have created an inclusive, harmonious and friendly school. Pupils feel safe, grow in confidence and develop good learning behaviours. This is because everyone in the school nurtures and meets pupils' social and emotional needs. Equally you, your staff and governors are aspirational for pupils' learning, setting high expectations for achievement. You and your staff are reflective and search for best practice to further improve outcomes for pupils.

The school has successfully tackled the two areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. Firstly, governors and senior leaders have put in place sound plans to manage changes to leadership roles over time. A carefully designed succession plan with transition arrangements for the headteacher role is in place and you will assume the substantive headteacher role in September 2016. Subject and phase leaders work effectively in teams to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. As a result, there have been improvements made in pupils'

phonics (letters and the sounds that they make), writing, and early years outcomes. School leaders are taking prompt action to sustain pupils' good progress in reading and mathematics. You recognise that further work is required to embed these strategies and to check their impact.

The second area for improvement has also been tackled. You have maintained the good quality of teaching and there are some examples of very strong teaching. This has been achieved alongside several changes to the staffing profile since the last inspection. While the most able pupils' attainment has been variable over the last three years, in 2015 these pupils generally made good progress from their starting points. Work in mathematics books shows that the most able pupils are provided with the challenge to deepen their learning. Both you and your governors carefully monitor the progress of all pupils, including the most able, to ensure that they are making good progress. You and your leaders regularly check that teaching is well matched to pupils' needs. Supportive feedback and training are provided to help teachers continuously develop their skills.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your staff and governors give the highest priority to keeping pupils safe. Leaders and governors have ensured that current safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are of high quality. Careful checks are carried out on all staff, governors and volunteers. Leaders have updated safeguarding and behaviour policies to ensure all requirements are met and all staff understand the procedures and their own responsibilities. Staff and governors receive regular and appropriate training so they know how to keep pupils safe. Regular meetings of the school's safeguarding team, including the learning mentors, ensure careful scrutiny of any concerns regarding pupils' safety and welfare. Referral to other agencies is well managed. Close links with external agencies ensure pupils and their families receive the help and support they need to keep pupils safe and in education.

Learning mentors and school systems, such as the 'worry box' and 'ask it basket', effectively support pupils who have any troubles. Pupils are well taught about how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take and know that staff will help them if they ever have concerns. Pupils say incidents of bullying are rare in their school. The school's records show that incidents of misbehaviour and bullying are infrequent and that they are quickly addressed by the staff. Racist incidents are extremely rare and any are rigorously followed up by school leaders. Pupils, parents and staff agree that behaviour at the school is good.

Inspection findings

- An innovative succession plan for transfer of the headteacher role was implemented from September 2015. However, absence of the other co-headteacher required you to move to acting headteacher in January 2016. You have successfully assumed this leadership role and have a strong vision of how to move the school forward to the next stage of development. Staff have a clear understanding of the goals the school aims to achieve and are

motivated to accomplish the best outcomes for pupils. Parents' views of the school are very positive and this is confirmed by their responses to the Ofsted Parent View online questionnaire.

- Governors provide good strategic challenge and support for leaders. They are ambitious to achieve the best academic and personal development outcomes for pupils. Their forward thinking has secured effective transition of the headteacher role to you and ensured that leadership capacity has been maintained through the appointment of an acting deputy headteacher.
- Subject leadership in English and mathematics, provided through small teams, has a positive impact overall. However, currently some leaders are new to their roles while other experienced leaders are moving to new subject areas. To see through your planned improvements in reading and mathematics these changes need to become firmly established alongside training for subject leaders.
- Systems for checking the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school are thorough. Findings from this monitoring are used to good effect to plan training which continuously improves the quality of teaching across the school.
- The teaching of phonics is well structured and carefully matched to pupils' levels of development. As a result, the proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard has been above that found nationally for the last three years.
- While broadly in line with that found nationally, the overall progress made by pupils in mathematics and reading has fallen over recent years. You and your staff are working hard to further improve the quality of mathematics teaching and to take account of the developments in the mathematics national curriculum. Relevant training and checking for improvements are having a positive impact. You agree that there is more to do to achieve consistently high-quality teaching and learning in mathematics, and this remains a priority area of work.
- The school has taken prompt action to improve reading. For example, the development of the library and book stock along with the 'treasure map' reading challenge are motivating pupils to read more regularly. You also have plans in place to review the impact of the teaching of reading in structured reading lessons.
- Systems for measuring and recording pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics are generating useful information. Staff are using this information with growing confidence to match teaching to meet pupils' needs, including increased challenge for the most able pupils. Leaders use this information to good effect to check the progress of all pupils.
- The school is successfully improving disadvantaged pupils' progress. By the end of Year 6 the progress gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are closing in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because leaders, including governors, check the progress of these pupils carefully. The 'closing the gap' initiative across the ASPIRE schools network is providing effective staff and governor development to strengthen this work.
- Attendance levels have improved and are higher than those found nationally. This is because good attendance has a high profile around the

school and pupils understand the importance of attendance and punctuality. However, absence rates for disadvantaged pupils are higher than those of their classmates. You and your staff, including learning mentors, are working hard to narrow this gap.

- Teachers' feedback and marking helps pupils to identify readily where they are demonstrating learning and informs them how to improve their work. Target cards help pupils to identify their next steps in learning and where they are making progress. Pupils understand these approaches and respond positively to improve their work or deepen their learning.
- From their starting points, children make good progress in Nursery and Reception classes. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has improved, although in 2015 it was still below that found nationally. Actions taken to improve boys' writing and the outdoor learning provision are bearing fruit. For example, boys were keen to take the role of builders in the construction area and to write in a range of different formats. Independent writing activities about a forthcoming farm visit encouraged children to draw annotated maps and plan a healthy packed lunch.
- The improvements to the Nursery outdoor provision are having a positive impact on children's learning, and similar plans are in place for the Reception provision. Children's progress information for 2016 shows improvements for all pupils, including boys and disadvantaged children. This means an increasing proportion of children are well prepared for starting Year 1.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and at playtimes is good. They work hard and are keen to share their learning with adults. High staff expectations, a caring atmosphere and constructive feedback encourage pupils to produce high-quality work.
- At the start of the inspection the school did not meet requirements on the publication of information about the special educational needs report on its website. You promptly ensured that the report was made available on the school's website.
- You and your governors have benefited from local authority support with leadership arrangements and school self-evaluation.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the actions taken to further improve pupils' progress in reading and mathematics are firmly established
- the leadership skills of subject leaders who are new to the role or new to their subject area are further developed.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Reeves
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you, the acting deputy headteacher, and your English and mathematics leadership teams. I talked with pupils about what it feels like to be a member of the school community and looked at the responses from 71 parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire. I observed and spoke with pupils during playtime and at other times during the day. I held discussions with a representative of the local authority and with four governors, who were able to provide me with additional information. I also took into account school documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website. I considered the responses to the five staff questionnaires. Alongside you or your acting deputy headteacher, I visited six classes to observe teaching and learning. We looked at pupils' work to help us evaluate the quality of teaching and learning over time.