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Ms S Bidois
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Dear Ms Bidois

Short inspection of King's Somborne Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 October 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 2012.

Context

There have been changes to staffing and to the membership of the governing body since the school was last inspected. The chair of governors has been in post for three years and you took up the post of headteacher in January 2016. The school was without a substantive headteacher from the summer term 2015 through to the end of the autumn term 2015.

This school continues to be good.

Overall, the leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As the new headteacher, you established yourself swiftly as a force for change and improvement. You developed good relationships quickly with staff, pupils and parents, who are confident about approaching you if they have concerns. Together with staff and governors, you devised a school improvement plan which has brought staff and governors together to help the school to improve. Although the school's improvement plan is very clear about what could be better at the school, it does not include enough targets against which progress can be measured during the course of the year.

In 2015 the school met the current government floor standard. This is the minimum standard for pupils' achievement and/or progress. However, soon after taking up your post, you recognised the need to accelerate the progress made by pupils, particularly at key stage 2. You helped to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve. As a result, in 2016, a much higher proportion of pupils than in most schools nationally achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and

mathematics. Furthermore, a large proportion of pupils achieved a high score in reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling, writing and mathematics. However, no disadvantaged pupils achieved a high score.

Standards by the end of key stage 1 have typically been a strength of the school. However, they took a dip in 2016, with a low proportion of pupils reaching or exceeding the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. This group of pupils are now in Year 3. Together with leaders and governors, you have put effective systems in place to support these pupils so that they catch up with their learning quickly. You are also focusing on key stage 1 and have already made some significant changes which are starting to improve the quality of teaching and learning in this part of the school. While there are already improvements since last year, the progress made by pupils at key stage 1 has yet to accelerate enough to ensure that the most able pupils achieve a high score in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.

Governors have developed and improved their roles and now hold leaders to account more rigorously than has previously been the case. They are focusing more sharply on the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. This has contributed to the very good progress made by this group of pupils last year. However, governors do not check routinely on the progress made by those pupils who are disadvantaged and also amongst the most able. Governors challenged school leaders about the previously low levels of attendance for some groups of pupils. This led to improvements in the way the school responds to pupil absence, especially that which is unauthorised. The time and attention of the governing body has been diverted with the need to appoint a highly effective new headteacher. Consequently some aspects of their role have not been fulfilled as well as they should have been. For example, they have not ensured that the school's website was kept up to date. Consequently, there is a range of information and documentation which is either missing from the school's website or is out of date, such as information about the use and impact of the pupil premium.

At the time of the last inspection, the school was asked to improve the quality of teaching and learning to become outstanding by planning work that meets the different needs of pupils, particularly those of higher ability. The school was also asked to ensure that pupils know how well they are achieving and what they need to do next in order to improve further.

Governors and leaders have ensured successfully that teaching provides pupils with the next steps to help improve their progress in English. However, not all teachers provide pupils with the same high-quality feedback in mathematics. Consequently, pupils are more confident about how to improve their work in English than they are in mathematics. The quality of teaching and learning is not yet good enough to be outstanding. Most teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve. Nevertheless, they do not all ensure that their most able pupils develop a depth of knowledge and mastery of what is being taught, particularly in mathematics.

Pupils develop their reading skills quickly at the school. Even those of lower ability and the disadvantaged learn to use their phonics skills to read unfamiliar words. The most able pupils read confidently and for a range of purposes. They take note of the language and sentence structures used by different authors to help them with their own writing. They demonstrate a good understanding of the difference between fact and opinion. They read clearly and with expression, making very good use of punctuation and intonation. Teaching typically helps pupils to recall key vocabulary in mathematics as well as in English. This helps pupils to talk about their work and to contribute to the assessment of how well they are progressing. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were observed explaining how they would solve a mathematical problem and the method they would use.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive additional support, often provided by learning support assistants. While on the whole the quality of this support enables pupils to make expected progress, sometimes pupils are not moved on as quickly as they could be or provided with enough challenge, particularly in reading.

The work seen in pupils' books in Year 6 shows that pupils can use clauses and phrases and write in the first person. Pupils use a variety of techniques well in their writing to set the scene of a story, such as using adjectives, similes, metaphors and alliteration. Pupils in Year 4 use conjunctions confidently.

Attainment on entry to the school is typically above average. However, some children begin the Reception Year with low levels of communication, language and literacy skills. Children typically make good progress in the early years and more than in most schools have achieved a good level of development. There are very few disadvantaged pupils in this part of the school.

Children achieve particularly well in the early years in their personal, social and emotional development. They develop an understanding of the world quickly and achieve well in art and design. However, their communication, language and literacy are not as strong as other areas by the end of Reception. As a result, staff have ensured that there is stronger focus on writing in the early years and in Year 1. This is creating more opportunities for pupils to write and is accelerating the progress they are making. The outside area in Reception, for example, includes a corner shop for pupils to pretend to go shopping and write shopping lists. At the time of the inspection children in the early years were observed showing a good level of independence for their age. They listen to each other and to adults and follow instructions readily. Some offer to help others, for example to help put their socks back on after their judo lesson.

Parents who spoke to me were overwhelmingly positive about the school. They are confident that their children are happy, safe and well cared for. They believe the quality of teaching at the school is good. Parents appreciate how well children with special educational needs as well as medical needs are cared for by staff. One parent stated, 'Children look after each other here' and another, 'My children love coming to school.' Pupils who spoke to me said that they are happy and feel safe at school. They believe that behaviour is good and incidents of bullying are

rare. They say that 'everybody is treated the same, even if they are different in some way'.

Some pupils told me that they particularly enjoy art. I noted some lovely examples of creative collages depicting the story of creation on display around the school. I also observed pupils in Year 6 learning about shading, using pencils to create light and dark. Some of the work being produced was of a high standard. Pupils told me that they feel well taught. They value the feedback they receive from their teachers and say that this helps them to improve their work.

In their response to the staff questionnaire, all of the staff that responded said they are proud to be a member of staff at the school and that the school is well led and managed.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records of referrals are detailed and of high quality. Staff know who to inform should they have concerns about pupils at the school. They have all completed the relevant child protection training including training to help prevent pupils from being at risk of extremism and radicalisation. The child protection and safeguarding policies are detailed and up to date. These policies provide clear guidance for staff about how to recognise signs of safeguarding and child protection issues. Pupils are taught about how to use the internet safely and how to keep themselves safe both in and outside of school.

Inspection findings

- Your strong and clear leadership led to a significant rise in standards by the end of key stage 2 in 2016. Girls, disadvantaged groups and the most able made much better progress than had been the case in the previous year.
- You have helped middle leaders to develop their roles well so that they now lead in their areas of responsibility and contribute effectively to raising standards.
- You manage the performance of staff very well. You identify those in need of additional support and training and those ready for additional challenge and responsibility. You then ensure that the relevant opportunities are provided to staff to support their professional development.
- You have succeeded in getting teachers to focus on promoting a good level of progression of skills and understanding. However, you recognise that not all staff are equally adept at providing enough challenge for their most-able pupils. You follow this up with regular meetings with staff to discuss the progress that individual pupils are making.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They challenge senior leaders about the use and impact of staff and resources. However, they have not always followed up on issues they have raised. There is evidence, for example, of governors requesting information about the use of the pupil premium, but they did not ensure

that an evaluation of the impact of the use of this additional funding was made available to parents on the school's website.

- Although leaders did not evaluate formally the use and impact of additional funding through the physical education (PE) and sports premium, this additional funding is having a positive impact on pupils. The school employs a specialist PE teacher and makes use of a local sports ground to provide pupils with high-quality PE teaching. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about learning to play basketball and football and appreciate having access to suitable grounds to do this.
- Governors recognise that they took 'their eye off the ball' in terms of maintaining the school's website. They have not ensured that the school's website includes all of the information it is supposed to provide. They understand that this aspect of their work needs to be addressed quickly.
- Although the school's improvement plan includes those aspects of the school's work that are not as strong as they could be, there are shortcomings within the plan itself. This is because the plan does not include milestones against which progress can be checked during the course of the year, success criteria are not measurable and there is no specific reference to disadvantage pupils who are also most able.
- Leaders and governors currently track the progress made by most groups of pupils closely. This includes a regular review of the work in pupils' books and an analysis of the school's data about progress and standards. However, this has not always been done rigorously in the past. This led to fewer pupils last year than has typically been the case at the school achieving the expected standard for their age by the end of key stage 1.
- Evidence seen on inspection shows that pupils make better progress in English than in mathematics. Furthermore, the progress that pupils make is better at key stage 2 than it is at key stage 1.
- The progress in pupils' English books this term highlights good progress, particularly at key stage 2. Some pupils at key stage 1 are also progressing well. A pupil in Year 2, who at the beginning of the year could only write in simple sentences, now produces extended written work and stories that are interesting and follow a logical sequence. This pupil uses adjectives and is starting to use paragraphs. One of the stories included the sentence: 'To his amazement inside was a sparkly gold potato.'
- The work seen in pupils' mathematics books, while showing that pupils typically make expected progress, does not reflect the same rate of rapid progress that is seen in pupils' English books.
- In mathematics, pupils are provided with opportunities to solve problems. Pupils in Year 3 have made good progress learning about place value. In Year 2, pupils are confident about what constitutes a 2-D shape. However, across the school, there is limited evidence of mastery and pupils developing a depth of knowledge and understanding of the mathematical concepts they are learning.
- Girls make better progress than has previously been the case. At key stage 1 they now achieve better than boys and at key stage 2 they are catching up quickly.
- Pupils who spoke to me about their work were positive about the targets set

for them in English. However, there was little evidence of the same high-quality feedback to pupils within their mathematics books.

- Although a higher proportion of pupils than in the previous year achieved the expected standards in the Year 1 phonic screening check, phonics is not always taught in a way that is sufficiently systematic and rigorous. You recognise that while some staff have attended training, further professional development in the teaching of phonics is still needed for a few staff.
- Levels of attendance are rising, particularly for those pupils whose attendance was low last year. You work closely with parents and outside agencies to support those families whose children have not attended school as regularly as they should have in the past. As a result, levels of attendance have significantly improved and were above the national average by the end of last year. Good attendance is celebrated and pupils arrive at school on time and eager to learn.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching in mathematics is as good as it is in English across the school
- the progress that pupils make at key stage 1 accelerates and that more pupils achieve a high score in reading, writing and mathematics
- the school improvement plan includes targets against which progress can be measured during the course of the year and a sharper focus on the most able pupils that are disadvantaged
- the school's website includes all of the information that it is supposed to and is kept up to date.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Winchester and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gehane Gordelier
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection I observed six parts of lessons, three of which were done jointly with you. I listen to some pupils reading, scrutinised a sample of pupils' English and mathematics books from across the school and reviewed the school's website and the school improvement plan. I also took account of a range of school policies and documentation, including those intended to help keep children safe. I scrutinised the school's administrative systems for recording the suitability of staff to work with children. I held discussions with you, staff and four governors,

including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. I spoke to a representative from Hampshire local authority on the telephone. I spoke informally to parents at the start of the school day and to pupils at playtime. I took account of 11 responses to the voluntary staff survey and 15 responses from parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View).

The key lines of enquiry chosen for this short inspection were:

- How effective is safeguarding?
- Is attendance improving, particularly for those pupils whose attendance was low last year?
- How effective is the work of leaders and governors in raising standards for all groups of pupils, particularly girls, disadvantaged groups and the most able?
- Are governors challenging senior leaders rigorously enough about the use and impact of staff and resources, including additional funding through the pupil premium and PE sports funding?
- Why is the school's website not fully compliant?