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18 November 2016

Frances Chapman
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Chapmanslade Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
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Dear Mrs Chapman

Short inspection of Chapmanslade Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 03 November 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 November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

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

Since your appointment in September 2015, you have led the school with drive and determination. This is because you have a clear, ambitious vision for where you want the school to be. It is because of the clarity of your vision that you take an uncompromising approach to school improvement. As a result, you are unafraid to tackle contentious issues or make difficult decisions in order to improve aspects of the school's work. You are not complacent in your approach. The school has many strengths but you fully recognise, and have been quick to confront, areas of weakness.

You appreciate that good leadership is about more than the headteacher. Consequently, you are taking effective steps to develop the leadership skills of other staff to plan for succession and safeguard leadership in the future. Teachers and teaching assistants are being successfully encouraged to embrace change and to take risks in order to develop their practice. You understand that making mistakes is a crucial part of the learning process, which is why you have been keen to establish a 'high challenge, low threat' culture. As a result, staff morale is high and staff feel positive about the future. This is supported by the staff survey, issued during the inspection, which is overwhelmingly supportive of your leadership. You are well

supported by governors who know the school well and share your ambitious vision for the school. They use various sources of information to frame the most important questions that hold you to account and challenge you to do your best for the school.

You and governors fully recognise that the leaders' core purpose is to raise achievement through improved teaching and learning. As a result, staff now have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. Over time, pupils achieve well in a number of subjects in the school. When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, their achievement in reading, and in spelling, punctuation and grammar, is particularly notable. This is especially true for the most able pupils. Achievement is high in these areas because teaching has been consistently strong in many respects and continues to improve. However, you acknowledge that pupils' writing needs to improve to match their achievement in reading. You also recognise that teachers are not consistently providing work and resources that sufficiently support the least able and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders are creating a culture in which pupils can thrive. This is because expectations of staff and pupils are high, and because of your keen, unswerving focus on improving teaching and raising achievement. As a result, the school has a purposeful, dynamic atmosphere that is underpinned by its Christian ethos. Colourful, informative and vibrant learning environments encourage pupils to be curious and to enjoy their learning. Pupils are very well behaved and treat each other and adults with respect and courtesy. Staff have positive relationships with parents, which is evident in the responses of those parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View.

At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed on the key lines of enquiry to be considered during the day. These included establishing the effectiveness of actions to improve pupils' achievement in writing and in the early years. We also considered the effectiveness of actions to improve pupils' attendance and whether safeguarding was effective. These lines of enquiry are considered below under 'Inspection findings'.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is taken very seriously by all staff in the school. Pupils are well known to staff, who are highly vigilant and quick to recognise changes in behaviour that are out of character for a child. This is borne out by the quality of referral information you receive from staff, which is dutifully passed on, even for the slightest of concerns. As a result of this good intelligence, you, as the designated safeguarding officer, have a detailed understanding of potential child protection issues. You are therefore able to make informed decisions about how to pursue matters in the most appropriate way. You work effectively with outside agencies in order to do this. Checks to ensure that staff, volunteers and governors are appropriate to work with children are comprehensive, detailed and up to date.

Pupils report that they feel safe in school and are happy to approach members of

staff should they have any worries. Their view is also reinforced by the parents who responded to the Parent View survey, all of whom agreed, the majority strongly so, that their child felt safe in school.

The security of the school site has been improved with additional fencing and electronic door controls. This not only means that pupils are safer, but also that they have greater freedom to move around the school site at breaktimes. Pupils who spoke to me said that they were pleased about this because it felt like they had more freedom. You have also worked effectively with parents to ensure that they understand what is expected of them with regard to pupils' safety. This means that they are clear about where and when they should access the school site.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors are clear that the improvement of writing is the school's key area for development. As a result, they have taken action to address this, but acknowledge that there is further work to do. This is why writing continues to be an ongoing priority on the school's development plan.
- Pupils' work shows that they are being explicitly taught word-, sentence- and text-level writing skills and that they are applying these skills across the full range of subjects. As a result, the quality of pupils' spelling, punctuation and paragraphing is improving. Pupils are also being provided with more opportunities to write at length for different purposes and audiences, which is introducing greater versatility into their writing.
- Pupils are now taking greater pride in their writing and producing work that is better presented. More care is taken to space work out correctly, to underline titles and to concentrate on using legible handwriting. This is particularly true of the work of the very small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school.
- Teachers' high expectations are enabling pupils, particularly the most able, to achieve well in a range of subjects. This is because pupils find the teaching stimulating and, in the case of middle- and high-ability pupils, pitched well to their needs. These pupils gain confidence from being clear about what they are supposed to be learning and work in a purposeful way, often independently.
- Lower-ability pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support in lessons from teachers and teaching assistants. Staff ask the right questions, which prompt pupils to think and navigate their own way to the answers. However, work in pupils' books shows that pupils are generally not set tasks, or provided with resources, that are specifically matched to their needs. This prevents them from making more rapid progress, particularly in their writing.
- Leaders are tenacious and persistent in their efforts to reduce absence. They are swift to take action when attendance for pupils becomes unacceptably low. Leaders work closely with the attendance welfare officer and other agencies, such as the police, to ensure that parents understand the importance of good school attendance. Leaders are well supported by governors in this area of their work. As a result, attendance overall, and for most groups of pupils, is above average. Attendance for a very small minority of pupils is still unacceptably low and staff are doing all they can to improve this situation.

- The achievement of children in the early years is rising. In 2016, the number of children achieving a good level of development was well above the national average, which was an improvement on the previous two years. This is because of the good quality of teaching, the robust assessment that tracks children's learning and the improved inside and outdoor learning environments. It is also because staff have cultivated good relationships with parents, who are encouraged to play an active role in their child's learning.
- The achievement of boys in the early years is rising so that it is more comparable with the achievement of girls. This is because teachers in the early years recognised that boys were not achieving as highly as girls and adapted teaching to suit their needs. For example, to improve boys' understanding of phonics they were taught more kinaesthetically. This means that teaching activities enabled the boys to move around more and learn by doing.
- Staff have successfully developed activities that assist children, many of whom are boys, who enter Reception with poor fine motor skills. Activities include 'Funky fingers' and 'Dough disco', whereby children are encouraged to practise finger movement and develop their dexterity.
- All parents who responded to the Parent View survey agreed that their child was happy in school. The overwhelming majority of respondents agreed, many strongly so, that pupils are well taught, make good progress and are well behaved. Ninety-seven per cent of respondents would recommend the school. As one parent commented, 'We love Chapmanslade School. We feel our children are well looked after, challenged and offered great opportunities.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils are given further opportunities to regularly develop their writing skills across subjects, so that they make more rapid progress.
- staff provide pupils, particularly low-ability pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, with work and resources more closely matched to their needs. This will ensure that they make more rapid progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke to you, one of the early years teachers, pupils, representatives of the governing body and the school improvement adviser.

You and I made visits to lessons to observe pupils' attitudes to learning. The work in pupils' books was also scrutinised and I listened to pupils read.

A range of documentary evidence was considered, which included the school's self-evaluation, the development plan, attendance and child protection records. I also looked at information about pupils' progress, governing body minutes and notes of visit by the school improvement adviser.

In addition, I took account of 63 responses to the Parent View online survey, 13 responses to the staff survey and 94 responses to the pupil survey issued during the inspection.