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7 February 2017

Zara d'Archambaud
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Dear Zara d'Archambaud

Short inspection of Garsington Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 25 January 2017, 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 your school was judged to be good in December 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Since taking up your position in September 2015, you have built effectively on the school's many strengths. You and your team are passionate in your ambition to continue to improve the school.

You have developed a very positive culture for learning. Staff and pupils understand and uphold the school's values. One of these values is determination. Pupils say that they are encouraged daily to demonstrate determination by not giving up when their learning seems hard.

The school is a vibrant and happy community. One parent summed up the views of many when they said: 'The school takes the time to understand each child and their particular learning needs. When my child comes home they are always excited about what they have done that day.' Pupils, including those in the early years, are enthusiastic about their work and are keen to show how much they have improved. Children in Reception enjoyed comparing how they were writing when they first arrived at school with how they are writing now.

Your senior leadership team and governors are all dedicated to ensuring a positive working relationship with parents. Parents' views are important to you and staff act quickly on any feedback they provide. Parents value the opportunity provided each term to find out how their children are progressing. They say they are very well

informed about the standards their children are expected to reach in each year group in reading, writing and mathematics. Working parents particularly appreciate the early morning meetings to discuss progress, while their children attend breakfast club.

All groups of pupils at this school make good progress. In the early years a much higher proportion than found nationally reach a good level of development. Consequently, children are well prepared for their learning in Year 1. At the end of key stage 1 a greater percentage of pupils, when compared with the national average, attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Since the last inspection in 2012, you have worked hard to identify what the school needs to focus on next to ensure that pupils receive a consistently good quality of education. Staff have been well trained and carefully supported. As a result, teachers have maintained the good outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2. The areas to improve identified at the previous inspection focused on subject leadership, the teaching of phonics and teachers' use of school performance information. These have all been carefully addressed. Subject leaders now have a greater role in monitoring their areas of responsibility. Phonics teaching is stronger than it used to be. Teaching makes effective use of school performance information about pupils to ensure that pupils progress well.

Leaders recognise that teaching and learning in writing needs further development to provide greater challenge. This applies particularly to the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, so that they can extend their skills further. Leaders also appreciate that, while governors receive clear information regarding the progress of disadvantaged pupils, information on the progress of other groups of pupils is not always presented in a clear enough way.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is a high priority in this school. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The single central record of recruitment checks is fully compliant with the government's requirements. Training for staff is up to date and has included issues such as child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and the duty to protect pupils at risk of radicalisation. Governors are also very knowledgeable about all the potential risks to pupils.

You and your staff have a deep understanding of the individual needs of pupils. Discussions and records show that you have good links with a large range of professionals and you do not hesitate to call on them if you suspect any form of abuse or neglect. Pupils say they feel safe in the school. You ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with the necessary skills to keep themselves safe, including when online.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we agreed to look at how leaders have addressed the areas identified at the previous inspection. Together we considered the impact of the pupil premium spending on disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and attendance. We also looked at pupils' progress in writing across the school.
- The previous inspection recommended improving pupils' knowledge of phonics to improve their reading. You and your team have worked hard on this area. Staff are well trained, so they can identify what each pupil needs to learn next. This has had a positive impact on the amount of progress pupils now make. Results in the phonics screening check have improved considerably. In both 2015 and 2016, the school's performance in the phonics screening check was better than the national average.
- The previous inspection report identified that subject leaders did not have enough opportunities to check on the quality of teaching and learning. It is evident from the rapid progress of pupils seen across the school that subject leaders are now highly effective in monitoring learning in their areas of responsibility. They regularly look in pupils' books and provide helpful feedback and support to teachers.
- In 2012, teachers were not confident in their interpretation of information regarding pupils' progress. Teachers now know precisely how each pupil is progressing. Regular meetings between teachers and leaders concentrate on how to maximise the performance of each pupil. Governors are also very confident in knowing how some groups of pupils, such as those eligible for the pupil premium, are progressing. However, there is a lack of precision regarding their understanding of the progress of some other groups of pupils in the school. This is because the information they receive from the leadership team is not always clearly broken down into all the pupil groups.
- An area of focus during my visit was to assess the impact of pupil premium spending on the outcomes and attendance of eligible pupils. This is because previously the attendance of disadvantaged pupils was below national levels. Low attendance impacted on the amount of progress these pupils made. All staff have worked effectively to improve this situation. You have now successfully addressed this issue. Currently, the attendance of those who are eligible for the pupil premium has increased and is now slightly above the national average.
- Well-targeted funding has ensured that disadvantaged pupils make good progress. This is because you carefully track their progress and put in place effective interventions for those who need to improve.
- The last area of focus during my visit was to check pupils' progress in writing across the school. This is because in the 2016 end of key stage 2 outcomes, pupils in Year 6 did not make such strong progress in writing as they did in other subjects. You have acted swiftly to ensure that pupils now make better progress across the school. Books show that pupils develop a love of writing. However, teaching does not challenge those pupils who are most able, including the

disadvantaged most able, to enable them to fully develop their skills and to further enrich their vocabulary.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- information presented to governors regarding pupils' performance clearly includes all groups of pupils
- teachers challenge those who are most able, including the most able disadvantaged, to extend their skills and vocabulary in writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Liz Bowes
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, members of your senior leadership team, governors including the chair of governors, a representative from the local authority and an adviser from the diocese of Oxford. Discussions were also held with pupils. I spoke to a few parents at the start of the school day and took into consideration a letter and 77 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. Together we visited all the classes and looked at pupils' books. Views expressed by 25 staff who had responded to the staff survey were also considered. A range of school documentation was checked, including: leaders' evaluation of the school's performance and plans for improvement; assessment, behaviour and exclusions information; the single central record of pre-employment checks; policies and procedures and minutes of governors' meetings.