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Dear Mrs Gilbert

Short inspection of Pewsey Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in June 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your vision to ensure that the 'whole school community works together to create a school which is focused on raising aspirations for all, and challenges everybody to achieve their potential: socially, emotionally and academically' is borne out in all aspects of school life.

You are a determined and effective leader with drive and ambition for excellence in all aspects of the school's work. You work tirelessly on this within your own school community and also spend some of your time working beyond this school as a Wiltshire school improvement adviser (WIA).

You, your leadership team and governors set high expectations. Governors hold you to account robustly through a comprehensive menu of monitoring activities across the year. They have an accurate grasp of pupils' achievement and meet their statutory duties well. You are precise in your understanding of current school performance. Your leadership action ensures swift impact when further development is required and this has made a positive difference to pupils' outcomes. In short, you never stand still but instead search out ways to continually improve the school. Consequently, pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have been consistently high over a number of years.

Rightly, you are proud of the very high standards that the school achieves. Staff are particularly positive about the breadth of the curriculum. For example, the whole-school science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) week engaged pupils in motivating investigations and enquiry-led learning. As a result of good teaching, pupils are highly motivated and keen to learn, often displaying exemplary behaviour and attitudes to learning.

However, you are not complacent. You accurately identify that more needs to be done to strengthen assessment and progress in the early years. You have also swiftly addressed a need for some pupils, especially boys, currently in Years 1 and 2 to catch up quickly. For most of these pupils, good teaching and targeted intervention is ensuring that they are making the gains they need to catch up and achieve well.

The way in which the school engages with pupils and families through the work of the pastoral manager, parent support adviser and special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is impressive. Pupils benefit from wide-ranging provision which enables vulnerable pupils to get the support they need emotionally, socially and academically.

Parents are very supportive of the school. Every respondent agreed that their children make good progress at this school. The vast majority of parents would recommend it to others.

At the previous inspection you were asked to accelerate progress in mathematics. The impact of the school's work in this regard is effective. Plenty of opportunities are now available for pupils to reason, problem solve and explain their thinking. Pupils at the top of the school show a real sense of maturity in the way they explain their working out and apply their mathematical understanding across a wide range of concepts and subjects. Teaching of mathematics is good. Consequently, pupils make strong progress in mathematics, with some pupils making progress that is more rapid.

You were also asked to strengthen the effectiveness of leaders and managers by ensuring that agreed improvements to teaching were consistently and effectively applied across the school. Leaders' regular monitoring of teaching and evaluation of pupils' work ensures that any weaknesses are picked up quickly. For example, where most-able pupils did not achieve as well as you aspire in reading at key stage 1, improvement is already evident this term. Middle leaders have a strong impact across the school. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. For example, they undertake tasks to analyse the impact of teaching on learning through book scrutiny and visiting lessons.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture and a whole-school coordinated response to keeping children safe from harm at this inclusive school. Those leaders responsible for safeguarding are diligent in making timely referrals and actively engage with external agencies to minimise risk of harm.

The work of the parent support adviser, SENCo and pastoral manager ensures that vulnerable pupils' emotional, social and academic needs are well catered for. Multi-agency support is swift and wide ranging, including early help, and health professionals and support for young carers.

Staff have completed all appropriate training, including a recent update to 'Keeping children safe in education', 2016, and training in the 'Prevent' duty.

Almost all pupils who responded to the pupils' survey confirmed that they feel safe in school. Pupils spoken to on inspection reported that they feel safe at school and know to go to an adult if they have concerns. Pupils talk confidently about e-safety. Clear guidance and expectations are set. For example, there is a responsible user's statement that pupils sign and adhere to.

Inspection findings

To ascertain that the school remained good, a key line of enquiry was about how well assessments are used to ensure the work on offer builds on what pupils already know so that pupils' progress is at least consistently good.

- Inspection evidence confirms that robust assessments at key stage 1 and 2 are used well so that any gaps in learning are filled. For example, because teachers have taught specific identified skills, those pupils who failed to meet the expected standards at the end of the early years are now catching up rapidly in Year 1.
- In mathematics, problem solving and reasoning activities build on what pupils already know and understand. These activities motivate, stimulate and challenge pupils and make them think hard. Leaders accurately identify that there are a few occasions when pupils have to work through too many questions that consolidate their understanding of number work before they get more challenging work. Overall, however, pupils' progress is good in mathematics and rapid for some pupils.
- In the early years, leaders have secured clear systems to hold adults to account to assess children's understanding. However, sometimes adults do not question and prompt as effectively as they could. This results in some opportunities to deepen children's understanding being missed and this slows progress.
- Leaders hold staff to account robustly for the assessments they make through specific progress meetings to discuss how well pupils are doing. Governors hold leaders to account for pupils' performance and assessment by visiting the school and undertaking detailed scrutiny of work, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

My second line of enquiry was about how effective teaching is for middle- and high-attaining pupils, particularly in reading, because published assessment information in 2016 suggested some variance in pupils' outcomes.

- The teaching of reading is good. Most middle- and high-attaining pupils do well at this school but some could do even better.
- The school's bespoke approach to teaching phonics is enabling pupils to use and apply their understanding of phonics to their reading and writing effectively. As a result, pupils' progress is at least good from their different starting points. The most able pupils also maintain rapid rates of progress. This results in a growing number of pupils set to achieve the higher standards in reading and writing by the end of the year.
- The recent emphasis on teaching comprehension skills is developing well. Using texts as a stimulus for history and English work is proving particularly effective. For example, pupils told the inspector that exploring what life was like at a workhouse in Victorian times through the text 'Street Child' by Berlie Doherty has helped them deepen their understanding and gain deeper insight into this period in history.
- However, not all middle-attaining pupils, or the most able disadvantaged pupils across the school, are able to read between the lines and infer meaning from the texts they read well enough. You are steadfast in your aim to ensure that these pupils are supported to develop these skills sooner so that a greater proportion reach the higher standards in every year group.

Another line of enquiry was about how well children progress from their starting points in the early years. This is because the proportion of children reaching a good level of development dipped slightly in 2016.

- Published outcomes do not provide a full picture of children's progress in 2016. Inspection evidence confirms that these children made good progress from their lower starting points last year.
- Children enjoy the activities on offer. They are motivated and show independence in their play. However, you accurately identify that teachers' assessments could develop and track children's development more precisely. This is because some activities planned do not consistently help children to sustain their concentration and practise or apply their skills to a wider range of contexts.
- Overall, children who are currently in the early years are making typical progress from their different starting points. You are determined in your efforts to ensure that the provision on offer consistently builds on what children can and cannot do, so that the proportion of children making consistently high rates of progress increases, and any gaps between disadvantaged children's attainment and that of others diminishes quickly, particularly in speech and language development.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a greater proportion of the middle-attaining and the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, gain a greater understanding of what they read so that more pupils exceed the expected standards in every year group.
- ensure assessment in the early years is precise so that the proportion of children making consistently high rates of progress increases and any gaps between disadvantaged children's attainment and that of others diminishes quickly, particularly in speech and language development.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Carrington

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We observed pupils' learning across the school. I held meetings with senior leaders and middle leaders. I undertook an online telephone conference with three governors. I also met with the parent support adviser and pastoral manager.

I scrutinised school documents, including the school's action plan and its self-evaluation document. I also looked at records relating to behaviour and safety, attendance and safeguarding. I looked at work in books to establish the current quality of pupils' work and their progress over time. I also listened to pupils read.

I considered 23 responses to the online survey, Parent View. I also considered the views of staff and pupils through an online survey and discussions during my visit.