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Mr Simon Hall  
Executive Headteacher  
Cornwood Church of England Primary School  
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Dear Mr Simon Hall

### **Short inspection of Cornwood 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 inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in March 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

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

After the last inspection, the school entered a period of significant staffing turbulence which affected different roles. However, you and your governing body have successfully steered the school through this challenging time and are now reaping the benefits of good staff appointments. In particular, you appointed a new head of school who has had a positive impact on developing systems to raise attendance. Furthermore, staff morale is high, as shown by their responses to the questionnaire issued during the inspection. School leaders show no signs of complacency and are aware that there are areas they still need to work on. These include improving attendance further and ensuring that girls make comparable progress to boys in different subjects.

Parents who spoke with me are extremely happy with the school, although a small minority feel that at times the most able pupils are not always challenged to perform to the very best of their ability. The online survey, Parent View, confirms that parents are very positive about the quality of education and care that the school provides.

The previous inspection identified that the school needed to improve pupils' wider curriculum opportunities, so that they could develop their knowledge, skills and

understanding further. You have successfully addressed this area for improvement and teachers are now skilled at planning interesting opportunities to invigorate the curriculum. Several pupils spoke very enthusiastically about how they enjoy what they are learning and the opportunities that they now have. In particular, children in the early years were eager to explain to me their learning about the North Pole. They were keen to show me their igloo display and their writing outcomes. Likewise, in key stage 2, pupils spoke enthusiastically of their learning about the Anglo Saxons and the monarchy.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Governors regularly check systems and processes, alongside external audits, to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Staff are regularly trained in ways to keep pupils safe and parents are extremely positive about the school's culture of keeping pupils safe. All the pupils who spoke with me said that they feel safe in school and know what to do if they have a worry or concern. They have a keen understanding of how to keep themselves and their friends safe both in and outside of school. Pupils told me that there are very few incidents of bullying. They sometimes 'fall out' but then quickly make friends again.

### **Inspection findings**

- My first line of enquiry related to attendance. Historically, pupils' attendance has not been good enough. The attendance of all pupils is now good and improving, since the implementation of a more thorough approach to tackling absence. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also improving rapidly. The head of school has been the catalyst for this change and pupils now recognise the importance of attending school. They also say that they enjoy the rewards on offer for good attendance, such as 'hot chocolate' sessions and special attendance assemblies. The vast majority of parents recognise the importance of their children attending school regularly. Where this is not the case, staff are working closely with parents to improve attendance.
- A second line of enquiry related to the progress made by the small number of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school's assessment information and pupils' work in a wide range of subjects demonstrates that the progress of these pupils is improving rapidly and is now good.
- The third line of enquiry concerned the teaching of phonics. You and other leaders recognised that more work was needed to make sure that all pupils achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1. You swiftly implemented a range of changes, including staff restructuring, to ensure better progress. As a result, pupils now receive high-quality phonics teaching, particularly those pupils who need to catch up. Pupils who are catching up used

appropriate strategies to help them to work out unfamiliar words when I listened to them read.

- My fourth line of enquiry was to consider the difference in academic performance between girls and boys. Leaders are not fully aware of the difference in achievement that exists across the school between girls and boys. Although numbers are small, boys do achieve better than girls in areas of the curriculum. In particular, differences exist between most-able girls and boys in reading and writing.
- My final line of enquiry related to writing. Your curriculum design, implemented since the previous inspection, has enabled pupils to develop their writing skills well across the curriculum. Teachers set high expectations and pupils rise to them. Pupils in key stage 2 told me that teaching helps them to learn and to focus upon what they need to do to be successful. As a result of this effective teaching, pupils make good progress in writing across the school.
- The clear teaching of the characteristics of writing throughout the school enables pupils to develop a mature style of writing. For example, in the early years, children can start to join their handwriting with well-formed letters. By the time pupils enter Year 6 their handwriting is typically fluent and composition for effect is typically strong.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff continue to monitor closely the attendance of pupils and work with parents to reduce levels of absence
- teaching enables girls to achieve as well as boys, particularly for the most able.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Middlemore  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this short inspection I met with you, the head of school, the special educational needs coordinator, the designated safeguarding leader and governors. You and the head of school visited classes to observe learning with me and we looked at work in pupils' books from across the curriculum. I met with pupils throughout the day and spoke with a group of parents from across the school. I considered 23 responses to the pupil questionnaire, 15 responses to the staff

questionnaire and 25 responses to the Parent View questionnaire. I listened to several pupils read and observed pupils in the playground. I conducted a detailed review of safeguarding, including checking on the school's policies, procedures and record keeping. I talked to you, other staff and governors about how the school ensures that children are kept safe. I also considered a range of other documentation, including the pupil premium strategy, school improvement planning and information about pupils' progress and attainment.