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Mrs Margaret Williams  
Executive Headteacher  
Etchingham Church of England Primary School  
Parsonage Croft  
High Street  
Etchingham  
East Sussex  
TN19 7BY

Dear Mrs Williams

### **Short inspection of Etchingham 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 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. You and your leadership team have very successfully steered the school through a period of considerable change, ensuring that pupils continue to make good progress throughout. The school is now settled and well established in its new location in the heart of the village.

As executive headteacher, you divide your time appropriately between the two schools in the federation. You provide inspirational leadership for the staff and governors and a strong, clear vision for the school's future. You and your leadership team have developed a culture of high expectations for all pupils, combined with careful attention to their individual needs. Governors and all members of staff share your commitment to ensuring that every pupil grows personally and academically and achieves their full potential.

You have established an ambitious and aspirational culture in which and you and your teachers are keen to develop professionally. Your recognition of teachers' individual talents, combined with effective coaching and training, has ensured that staff develop leadership skills, as well as improving the quality of teaching. For example, subject leaders are knowledgeable about the strengths and development needs in their subject areas of responsibility and speak confidently about the quality of pupils' learning. They make an increasingly valuable contribution to the school's development.

You ensure that the school is an outward-looking community. You and your team are open to new ideas. Teachers and leaders regularly visit other schools in the locality, including your partner school in the federation, to share good practice. Members of staff are extremely positive about working in the school and are understandably very proud of the school's success.

You and your team constantly look for ways to improve pupils' learning and to enhance their experience of school. For example, you have developed the curriculum over the past year so that it is even more lively and engaging than previously. As a result, learning is meaningful, exciting and fun. All groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well across the curriculum, including the very small number of disadvantaged pupils. Some of the most able pupils' mathematics and written work is of exceptionally high quality, reflecting improvements in the teaching of these subjects. However, you have rightly identified that, while pupils acquire a broad range of science knowledge and skills, some pupils do not achieve their full potential in this subject, particularly the most able. You already have appropriate plans in place to improve this aspect of the school's work.

The school has a friendly, welcoming and positive atmosphere. Strong relationships and the school's religious values provide a secure framework for pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave extremely well in lessons, during playtimes and when moving around the school. They are polite and kind to each other. Parents speak very highly of the school's work and say that their children thoroughly enjoy learning.

You and your leadership team have tackled effectively the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. You have sharpened school development planning so that staff and governors are clear about the school's direction. Substantial improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in early years mean that children make much more rapid progress than at the time of the previous inspection and are well placed for learning in Year 1. Adults make sure that children's play in Reception is purposeful, with an appropriately strong focus on learning. They keep a close eye on which activities children choose, making sure that all children benefit from a balanced range of experiences. As a result, all groups make equally good progress during early years.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your leadership team ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have strengthened the school's focus on safeguarding since the previous inspection, heightening awareness that safeguarding concerns can arise at any time and in any school. Your regular reminders to staff and governors that 'it could happen here' ensure that they are even more alert to pupils' safety than before, and constantly vigilant. Pupils told me that they feel safe and are very well cared for by teachers and other members of staff.

High-quality and detailed records contribute well to pupils' safety and well-being. Records show that you and your staff report, record and follow up any concerns promptly. You work well with parents and agencies, such as children's services and

the police, wherever appropriate. Your business manager oversees extremely rigorous systems to ensure that recruitment and suitability checks are complete and that all staff and governors have completed the required safeguarding training. The school site is maintained to a high standard so that pupils and staff are safe.

## **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, I focused in particular on: the effectiveness of early years provision, especially for girls and in mathematics; how well the teaching of reading at key stage 1 prepares pupils, especially boys, for key stage 2; how leaders ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities attend school well; how well leaders and governors plan and monitor school developments, and how leaders ensure pupils' safety.
- Adults in early years have appropriately high expectations of all children's potential to achieve, including the most able. The deputy headteacher works positively and constructively with parents and colleagues in pre-schools to build an accurate view of children's starting points and needs when they start school in Reception. Effective teaching and clear routines help children to feel secure, settle quickly and make good progress. Children listen carefully to adults, chat happily to each other while playing and learning, and behave extremely well.
- Information about learning during early years indicates that all groups of children make similarly good progress. In the last two years, outcomes at the end of early years have been much higher than at the time of the previous inspection. The rising trend in outcomes since the previous inspection at the end of Reception reflects improvements in teaching. Parents appreciate the steps that teachers and leaders take to make sure that their children feel secure. They are very pleased with their children's early experiences of school life.
- Boys and girls make equally good progress in reading during key stage 1. Pupils of all abilities develop a range of strategies to help them to read successfully. Effective phonics teaching ensures that pupils acquire basic reading skills quickly and securely. In 2016, all pupils achieved expected levels in the Year 1 phonics check. Teaching in Year 2 builds well on these foundations, moving pupils rapidly on to the next stage of their reading.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy books. They learn to read enthusiastically and confidently. The most able pupils happily tackle more demanding books which require them to think carefully about their reading.
- Leaders monitor pupils' attendance closely. They provide high-quality and effective support for the small number of pupils who find school difficult, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. All groups of pupils attend school regularly and punctually. Attendance rates are consistently higher than the national average for primary schools.
- The school's development plans provide clear structure and direction for future improvements. Leaders include appropriate targets and milestones in the school's development plans so that they can measure effectively the school's progress. Leaders, teachers and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and development needs.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching deepens and extends pupils' scientific understanding more effectively, 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 Chichester, the regional schools' commissioner and the director of children's services for East Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Julie Sackett  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

You and I visited all classes during the inspection. I reviewed pupils' books during my visits to the classrooms and talked with them about their learning. I also looked separately at a sample of pupils' books and considered information about pupils' learning and progress with you, your deputy headteacher and your mathematics and English subject leaders. I listened to four Year 2 pupils reading and talked to several pupils during playtime. I took account of 19 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. I reviewed the school's website and considered a range of documents, including your summary of the school's effectiveness, the school's improvement plan, reports completed by an external consultant and documents about safeguarding and attendance. During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, your English and mathematics leaders and the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. I also had a telephone conversation with a local authority representative and considered five responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.