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Mrs Caroline Colmer
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Colmer

Short inspection of Winslow Church of England Combined School

Following my visit to the school on 8 February 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 November 2012.

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 2016, you have successfully used the expertise within your senior leadership team and governing body to refine and develop the strengths of the school. You identify the areas that require further development accurately and take appropriate action to make any necessary improvements. You work well with the local authority and ensure that the school continues to meet pupils' needs effectively.

Winslow is a very caring school. Leaders, with the support of parents, are working hard to live up to the school's vision, 'Being the best we can be – together'. Excellent relationships exist between pupils and staff. Pupils show high levels of engagement in their learning. They feel valued and are proud to be part of the school.

Leaders and governors have effectively tackled the areas for improvement identified in the previous report. Teachers consistently check on how well pupils are learning and provide good-quality feedback on how work can be improved. Pupils are clear about what they need to do to further develop their learning. In lessons, there are now better opportunities and a wider range of tasks encouraging most-able pupils, for example in Year 2, to write in a greater variety of contexts. Leaders are focusing effectively on improving writing across the school so that pupils make strong progress. This is successfully challenging pupils to develop their understanding and

think more deeply. Middle leaders are now more effective in improving teaching than at the time of the last inspection, but their work does not yet have as much impact on pupils' outcomes as possible.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders and governors have developed a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. As a consequence, staff do all that they can to ensure that pupils are safe and secure at all times. There are rigorous, well-documented checks carried out on all staff to ensure pupils' safety. Governors monitor safeguarding systems well to check that they are fit for purpose.

Governors and staff undertake regular training to ensure that they are confident in dealing with child protection issues. All concerns about pupils are meticulously recorded and dealt with effectively. Leaders work closely with outside agencies to ensure the right actions and support are in place for vulnerable pupils. For example, a young carers' group provides emotional support for pupils, to help them become better learners.

Inspection findings

During this inspection, I particularly focused on the quality of leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, how well the areas for improvement from the last inspection have been tackled and the school's safeguarding arrangements. In addition, I focused on the teaching of writing, the progress of pupils with middle-attainment starting points, the progress of disadvantaged pupils and how well children are achieving in the early years.

- Working closely with the leadership team, you have rightly focused on improving writing as a priority. In 2016, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standards for their age in writing were low. Similarly, too few pupils achieved greater depth in writing by the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. Leaders' detailed review of the school's writing curriculum ensures that it now supports the higher expectations of pupils' outcomes that are required.
- A more consistent approach by teachers has resulted in pupils writing more, with greater accuracy and increased maturity. Pupils now edit and redraft their work successfully. As a result of teachers' high-quality feedback, they are using a wider range of vocabulary, writing more complex sentences and employing more sophisticated grammar.
- Leaders' current assessment information, and the work I saw across the school in pupils' books, shows that increasing proportions of pupils are achieving well. You recognise that changes in the writing curriculum need to embed further, so that a greater proportion of pupils reach the expected standard by the end of Year 6 and most-able pupils achieve the high standards of which they are capable.

- You have sensibly targeted the middle-attainment group of pupils, to improve their progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2016, the proportions of these pupils, which included disadvantaged pupils, that reached the expected standard were low. Additional support through specific interventions and regular 'booster' groups is enabling these pupils to make accelerated progress. The proportion of pupils who are making expected progress across the school is improving rapidly. The school's assessment information and pupils' work seen when visiting lessons show that the proportion of pupils with middle starting points who are on track to achieve expected progress is at least in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. This includes disadvantaged pupils in this group.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including most-able disadvantaged pupils, are achieving well. Targeted interventions for individual pupils ensure that they are confident in their learning, and understand and practise skills before they move on. In lessons, extra help reinforces pupils' learning and develops their understanding well. As a result, these pupils make accelerated progress and achieve good standards. There are good opportunities for the most able disadvantaged pupils to deepen their thinking. In Year 6, these pupils become effective 'learning mentors' to help less-able pupils understand their work.
- Children settle well and make good progress in the early years in a secure and caring environment. Teachers, acting on effective advice received from the local authority, provide a suitable range of adult-led and child-selected activities to develop children's language skills. The teaching of phonics is strong and there are plenty of opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills. Well-planned activities outside address the physical development needs of the children, and this is leading to improving outcomes. Consequently, children make good progress across the different areas of learning.
- You have taken effective action to improve the monitoring and coaching skills of middle leaders. They now provide accurate feedback to teachers about how they can be more effective, and this is helping to improve teaching. They are rightly beginning to review pupils' achievement and set high expectations for pupils' progress. However, further development and support is needed for middle leaders to drive rapid improvement. Senior leaders recognise that middle leaders are not yet being held fully to account for pupils' achievement in the subjects they lead.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- middle leaders' skills develop further and they are held fully to account for pupils' achievement in the subjects they lead
- improvements in the teaching of writing are further embedded so that all pupils, including the most able, make strong progress and achieve the learning of which they are capable.

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

Yours sincerely

William James
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I visited a number of classes across the school, accompanied by the headteacher. I looked at a range of work in pupils' books. I examined school documentation, including documents relating to safeguarding, leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness, local authority reports, governors' minutes and information about pupils' progress. I talked to pupils to gather their views during lessons and on the playground and analysed 69 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, governors, the inclusion manager and the leader of early years. I had a meeting with a representative of the local authority. I took into account the views of 61 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and considered 29 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.