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Mrs Nicola Ralph
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Ralph

Short inspection of Buckland Newton Church of England School

Following my visit to the school on 7 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 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. You have worked tirelessly to ensure that the school's work is focused on securing improvement. The actions of the adults who work in the school fully support the school's motto, 'every child, every chance, every day'.

Since the previous inspection, you have overseen the development of a pre-school to help meet local need, appointed a deputy headteacher and reorganised buildings within the school to make the site more secure. You have also developed a partnership with five primary schools and a local secondary school to provide increased opportunities for pupils in your care, such as through sharing of resources. The key stage 2 results have been consistently high for the last three years.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement raised at the previous inspection. You have ensured that there are opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in problem solving across a wide range of subjects. You continue to focus on improving pupils' mathematical skills. As a result, both progress and attainment of pupils in mathematics have been consistently above the national average since the last inspection.

Provision for children in the outdoor area in the early years has been developed so that the facilities match the good-quality indoor provision. The covered area is used well to develop children's writing and mathematics skills, the musical zone develops

both listening and creative skills and the growing area is used when teaching science.

You have overseen the development of a caring school that supports, challenges and nurtures its learners in a stimulating and thriving environment.

Safeguarding is effective.

The procedures for keeping pupils safe are a strong feature of the school. All adults are checked rigorously before starting to work in the school. Staff, governors and adults working with the school receive regular training and updates in keeping children safe. New staff who join during the year have a thorough induction that includes clear guidance on keeping children safe. As a result, all staff, governors and volunteers are fully aware of the risks that children may face and the correct procedures to follow when they have concerns. As a result of the close working relationship staff have with parents, all parents who spoke to me feel that the school is a safe place for their child.

Risk assessments are detailed and show that staff plan activities with thought and care. Records are detailed.

Pupils are aware of the situations they might face in future life and are taught about safe use of social media and of the internet. Pupils told me that they know who to talk to if they have concerns. They told me they felt safe at school and valued the support and care that adults gave them. They are clear about what bullying is and the different forms it takes. They commented that bullying was rare at Buckland Newton and that any instances are dealt with swiftly by staff and older pupils, who support their peers.

The site of the school is secure. Governors are vigilant in their duties and have invested funds to improve the security of the site. Procedures for visitors are rigorous.

Inspection findings

At the start of this short inspection we agreed that we would focus on the progress of pupils receiving support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities; the progress of lower-attaining pupils; the progress and achievement of higher-attaining pupils in mathematics; and the effectiveness of leadership and management at the school.

- In 2016, pupils who had special educational needs and/or disabilities did not make as strong progress as that made by other pupils in the school. You, and your team, have worked hard to match learning more closely with pupils' specific needs. You have trained staff to develop strategies that are more effective for teaching pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, the number of pupils who need additional support is reducing because of the improvement in teaching. While the progress of pupils who have

special educational needs and/or disabilities, currently in school, has improved, there is still further work needed to ensure that the progress made by this group is maximised.

- Although pupils who have an overall lower prior attainment score at the end of key stage 1 achieved a positive progress score in 2016, none achieved the expected standard for attainment in writing. Your team wasted no time before organising more effective support for these pupils to develop their writing. The team now shares resources with other schools in the partnership, bringing in experts to train staff and exploring ways of stimulating pupils to improve the quality of their writing.
- Pupils show great pride in their school. They are especially proud of the artwork that demonstrates the collaborative approach you have forged across year groups. Teachers make good use of these resources to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils said, 'school is like being at home'. Consequently, they feel safe and comfortable in school, while being challenged by teachers to have high expectations of their work.
- Pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education and teachers use their specialist expertise to accelerate pupil progress. For example, pupils benefit from specialist teaching across different parts of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 1 use algorithms with a specialist information technology teacher to understand how cakes are made.
- In key stage 2, pupils have consistently made the progress expected of them in mathematics over the last few years. However, too few of the most able pupils reached the higher standards at the end of key stage 2 in 2016. You have recognised the need to challenge the most able pupils better and have introduced a new whole-school calculation policy for the teaching of mathematics. You have engaged external support to develop the expertise of teachers and empowered pupils to support their own and other pupils' learning. Consequently, all pupils, but especially the most able, across the school are now making better progress than previously.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons because of the 'attention to needs' that teachers pay them and the level of challenge offered. Pupils and parents value the care that adults provide and are particularly vocal about the role played by the headteacher in creating a supportive culture. Staff who responded to the online questionnaire were overwhelmingly supportive of the school leaders.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same rapid rate of progress as other pupils in the school
- teachers plan learning which challenges low-ability pupils in key stage 2 to improve their writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Shanks
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I visited classrooms and an assembly. I looked at a large number of pupils' books in lessons and spoke with pupils about their learning. I also spent time with pupils at break, talking to them about their experiences in the school.

I considered the responses from staff to Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also took account of the views of 21 parents who responded to Parent View, those who spoke with me at the start of the school day and one letter received from a parent.

Meetings were held with you, your deputy headteacher and eight governors. I scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation and development plan, its specific action plan for key areas, safeguarding and child protection records, risk assessments and the school's assessment and tracking information.