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Mrs Joanne Williams
Headteacher
Charlton Horethorne Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mrs Williams

Short inspection of Charlton Horethorne Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 May 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Positive aspects of the school, in particular its caring ethos and pupils' exemplary behaviour, have been sustained.

On your appointment in September 2015, you quickly initiated new approaches to teaching that effectively meet the demands of the new national curriculum and the way in which pupils are assessed. You have strengthened leadership by training middle leaders in how to implement new developments successfully. However, you are aware that they are not as fully involved as they could be in checking the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. Governors and staff share your vision and determination to provide the best possible education for pupils at Charlton Horethorne. Leaders take pride that this school has 'big aspirations' for its pupils.

The previous inspection recommended that teaching should be improved by sharing expertise, to ensure that pupils are fully challenged in their learning. You have provided an extensive range of training and professional development for staff to extend their skills and develop effective practice. As a result of better teaching, progress has accelerated in all classes and most pupils achieved the standards expected for their age at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.

You use your deep understanding of pupils' capabilities to provide effective support. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils, thrive and make good progress. Parents are very appreciative of the caring, nurturing environment where 'staff go out of their way to meet the needs of each and every child'.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your governors place a high priority on keeping pupils safe. You ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are suitably detailed and of good quality. Leaders know how to recruit staff safely and follow statutory guidelines conscientiously. The knowledge and skills of staff are regularly updated. Leaders check that staff understand and follow their policies and procedures correctly. In your role as designated child protection officer, you are tenacious in monitoring and resolving any issues. You work effectively with outside agencies to reduce any potential risk to pupils and to keep them safe.

Pupils' attendance is above the national average and punctuality is good because pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to attend. Leaders work well with other professionals, such as the parent family support adviser, to promote regular attendance. You ensure that pupils are taught to keep themselves safe, for example when working online on the computer. In discussions, pupils demonstrated a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

Inspection findings

During the inspection I met with you to discuss the school's progress since the previous inspection. We agreed the following lines of enquiry: how well writing skills are taught; the effectiveness of middle leaders in driving forward improvements; the progress made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils; and how well the school keeps pupils safe.

- The broadly average results in writing in 2016 showed that progress was not as strong as in reading and mathematics, where high standards were achieved. You have taken swift action to improve teaching and raise teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement. You ensure that pupils' skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught systematically. Focused teaching each day has successfully improved pupils' ability to write in a lively and interesting way. Pupils write at length with obvious enjoyment because teachers present them with interesting tasks. During my visit, we looked at a range of pupils' books and agreed that, increasingly, pupils' writing is lively and entertaining. For example, Year 6 pupils used their imagination to good effect when adapting fairy stories, extending their skills well and achieving high standards. You acknowledge that sometimes pupils' achievement is hampered by a lack of fluency in their handwriting.
- Middle leaders are skilled in implementing effective practice because of the school's considerable investment in training, including opportunities to work alongside external consultants. This has increased the pace of school improvement such as in the early years foundation stage where leaders have

ensured that writing skills are taught more thoroughly. Here, the number of children achieving a good level of development has risen year on year and was well above the national figure in 2016. However, middle leaders are not sufficiently involved in checking the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility, to ensure that pupils reach even higher standards. This is holding back the effectiveness of these leaders.

- You have implemented effective systems to fully meet the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. You monitor closely the support the school gives these pupils to make the best possible progress and catch up to their peers. Your staff are skilled in giving the right levels of support and challenge so that pupils are increasingly successful in their learning and integrated fully into school life.
- Pupils enjoy the increased opportunities to take on a variety of roles and responsibilities, such as leading assemblies, which they undertake in a mature and thoughtful way. Members of the school council are proud to represent the views of classmates. You are receptive of their ideas, allowing them to organise charity events. Your trust in their capabilities allows them to demonstrate the leadership skills that will stand them in good stead in the future.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers follow a consistent approach to teaching handwriting
- the skills of middle leaders continue to increase so that they make a fuller contribution to monitoring and developing teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.

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

Yours sincerely

Sandra Woodman
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you and discussed the school's self-evaluation, information about pupils' progress and improvements since the previous inspection. Together, we observed learning in classrooms and looked at a large number of pupils' books. I heard several pupils of differing abilities read to me. I met with

pupils to talk about their experience of school life. Meetings were held with middle leaders, four governors and a representative from the local authority. I looked at a range of written evidence, including documents relating to safeguarding and attendance information. I took account of the views expressed by 37 parents who completed the online survey and their written comments.