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16 March 2017

Mrs Bernadette Fleet
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Fleet

Short inspection of Amport 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 February 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school. You know the school and your community well and aspire for Amport to be outstanding. You are clear about what needs to improve to make it so, because you have a very secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. You provide inspirational leadership and are supported well by your deputy. Together, your commitment to provide the best inclusive education for every pupil is clear, with one member of staff saying, 'They will never give up on a pupil.' Staff feel valued and work effectively together, sharing your high expectations and desire to improve the school.

Pupils told me how much they enjoy coming to Amport and how caring and friendly the school is. They spoke about how much they like their school because 'Everybody plays with everybody.' You have created a culture where pupils are keen to ask questions when something puzzles them. My classroom visits confirmed how much pupils enjoy their success. In an English lesson, pupils were discussing the themes within a painting in order to identify the features of the Gothic style. They were articulate and listened well to each other, building on each other's thoughts. In a mathematics lesson, pupils were keen to tell me about their investigation and how using the problem-solving tool of 'drawing a picture' helped them work out their answers.

At the time of the last inspection, the inspector highlighted the many strengths of the school, including high standards in mathematics and English at the end of key stage 2. You have maintained these standards, although you were rightly not satisfied with the reading results at the end of key stage 2 in 2016. The inspector also identified that there were some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching at that time. Leaders' work to address this has been effective and teachers are working well together to improve their teaching. As a result, teaching and learning are consistently good or better.

During this inspection, you shared that the school's greatest challenge, at present, is to sustain the high standards during a period of staffing change and limited leadership capacity. In order to maintain high standards in teaching and learning, you are currently teaching part time in Year 2. This is while you wait for a recently recruited middle leader to commence employment. As a consequence, we agreed that middle leadership needs to be further developed, so that these teachers have more of an impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders and governors fulfil their statutory safeguarding duties well. Policies and procedures are fit for purpose and day-to-day routines are secure. Records are very detailed and communication between staff is strong. This ensures that any safeguarding concerns are followed up rapidly. Pre-employment checks to ensure the suitability of staff are fully in place and recorded appropriately. Safeguarding training is regular and up to date. As a result, staff and governors understand their roles and responsibilities well.

You have set a positive example of care for every aspect of each pupil's welfare. This is demonstrated by the timely, individual support you give to pupils and their families. As one parent wrote, 'The school feels and operates like a family unit.' All parents who completed the online questionnaire, Parent View, feel that their children are safe at school. Parents value the school's swift response to any concerns. Pupils told me that they feel safe at school. One pupil said, 'It is really comforting being at a small school where everyone knows you and no one is left out.'

Inspection findings

- You responded swiftly to the dip in reading results at the end of key stage 2 in 2016. More challenging texts have been purchased for guided reading lessons. Pupils who are not reaching your aspirational 'Amport targets' are identified and allocated appropriate interventions to ensure that they 'keep up, not catch up'. The changes you have made to the teaching of reading are having a positive impact. As a result, pupils are now making at least good progress in reading.
- Leaders have taken effective action to improve progress in mathematics in key stage 1, where staff have a clear focus on deepening the mathematical learning

of pupils. Scrutiny of mathematics books shows that this new approach to teaching mathematics, along with a refreshed approach to problem-solving, is having a positive impact on pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts. Recent professional development for staff on different aspects of mathematics, especially reasoning, has also improved the teaching and learning. Pupils who are not making enough progress are carefully tracked and monitored by the leadership team, to ensure that their needs are better met.

- The governing body carries out its statutory duties effectively. Governors support and challenge you well. Your strong communication has helped to ensure that governors have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have a good understanding of the barriers that the school faces and are strategic in their approach to this. Recent mobility in teaching staff has been managed well. However, key leadership roles are not delegated effectively further than yourself and your deputy at present, although you have clear and timely plans to address this.
- The progress pupils made in writing by the end of key stage 2 in 2016 was significantly better than the national average. During the inspection, we examined whether these excellent results were sustainable. The progress in writing of a small number of pupils in key stage 2 is below what you expect. Helpfully, you ensure that these pupils receive bespoke interventions to ensure that they do not fall further behind. Classroom visits, including scrutiny of pupils' work, showed that, generally, writing standards remain high, pupils are challenged well and most continue to make at least good progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- middle leadership is further developed, so that these teachers have more impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school
- recent improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in reading and mathematics are maintained and developed, so that pupils' progress continues to improve.

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

Yours sincerely

Lea Hannam
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, you accompanied me on short visits to observe teaching, learning and assessment in every class. I assessed the quality of pupils' work with you and your deputy, as well as holding meetings with you both. I met with the chair of the governing body and had a telephone conversation with the vice-chair. I spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day. I considered 39 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the accompanying free text responses. I spoke to a group of pupils and heard them read. I checked that safeguarding arrangements were secure. I analysed a range of documentation, including the school's development plan and your evaluation of the school's effectiveness, information about pupils' progress, minutes of governing body meetings and local authority reports. I also considered 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and the results from the school's recent pupils' survey.