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Mrs Karen Wrixon
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Wrixon

Short inspection of William Barnes Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 March 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 July 2013.

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 2014, you have made sure that the school is inclusive and parents' views are welcomed. You have encouraged parents to join in with the learning of their children and this has enabled them to understand the changes in the curriculum and what is helpful when supporting a child at home. As a result, pupils are making better progress, especially with their reading.

Since the last inspection you have maintained a continual focus on improving writing, which has proved worthwhile. The results for pupils in writing at the end of key stage tests in 2016 placed the school among the top 40% of schools nationally. This represents good progress because the pupils in this year group joined the school from starting points that were below the national average. You have devised a system that is called 'home-school-talk-write' so that parents are fully involved in their child's writing from start to finish. In addition, pupils work together well to assist each other and this has contributed to better extended writing on a range of topics.

The local demographics have meant greater variation between year groups with regard to pupil numbers, gender balance and ability levels than seen normally. With your special educational needs coordinator and teachers, you have looked carefully at the needs of individual pupils to make sure that pupils are supported and

challenged effectively as they go through the school. Parents are appreciative of this and several who responded to the survey commented positively on this aspect of the school's work.

You provide opportunities within and beyond school which challenge pupils' thinking and support their well-being. In the week of the inspection, pupils had been out to visit the science dome and were writing and discussing their findings in sophisticated ways. The application of knowledge, skills and understanding to real-life situations was having a beneficial impact on the pupils' work. Pupils in various year groups have been successful in local football competitions. This was possible because of the effective spending of the sport premium funding.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that the safeguarding policy is up to date and very comprehensive, ensuring all are clear about the procedures to follow if a concern is raised. Parents are fully informed about the school's processes through the publication of the most recent national guidelines for safeguarding on the website. Staff are suitably trained in the most recent changes to safeguarding procedures, meaning that they can discharge their duties with confidence. Leaders are unyielding, yet sensitive in their work with pupils, parents and external agencies to ensure the support for the most vulnerable pupils is appropriate. Importantly, pupils feel safe and secure in school; most parents agree. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Inspection findings

- An area that was investigated to ascertain that the school remains good was the improvements made in the core subjects of English and mathematics. You have redistributed the leadership of these areas so that better support is provided to teachers to make sure pupils' skills are developed and monitored effectively. Consequently, teachers are provided with effective training whenever necessary so that pupil misconceptions can be rectified speedily. This is having a beneficial impact on pupils' work.
- The distributive leadership that you have put in place provides an oversight of the full range of subjects so that pupils experience a rich and varied curriculum. Teachers' expertise is sharpened because of their responsibility and accountability and pupil knowledge is enhanced. More opportunities for the teacher experts to share learning and assessment will build on the ever-strengthening practice within the school.
- Another area investigated was the improvements in the early years foundation stage and key stage 1. The teacher of the Reception class has made close links with the pre-school on site and the 'rising fives' attend school to support transition. The teachers in key stage 1 and Reception work together well and this has meant that learning activities are more securely focused on successful progress through the key stage. The closer links that you have forged with parents mean that pupils are heard reading at home more often, which is increasing their confidence and fluency. When this is not possible, you have

provided quiet spaces in school, at the start of the day, where parents can sit and read with their children so that no one feels disadvantaged and pupils gain from the support. Maintaining the links with parents is an ongoing area for development as the population fluctuates.

- Following the Year 6 results in 2016, you have identified that too few of the most able pupils achieved at the higher level in mathematics, writing and the spelling and grammar tests. Your work on ensuring that specific targets are set based on individual needs is making pupils' progress in these areas more rapid. Pupils know their targets and spoke of their confidence in securing them during the inspection. Despite this, you know that this is an area where development is still required because the future cohorts have more higher-ability pupils within them.
- You have an effective governing body which provides the analytical and evaluative aspect of the work of the school. This has helped the school to remain good while making constant changes to accommodate the demands of the new curriculum and its assessment.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers refine and share the best of practice in teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils' progress continues to improve across the full range of subjects
- the most able pupils attain the very highest levels
- the engagement with parents continues so that the aspirations of pupils are supported and understood.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, middle leaders, the chair and two governors, staff and pupils. I had a meeting with a school improvement adviser from the local authority. I visited lessons for all classes in the school. I looked at the quality of the work in pupils' exercise books. I considered documentary evidence relating to the impact of the school's work, including safeguarding. I took into account 21

responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and 13 comments written by parents plus the 11 responses from staff and the 23 pupil responses to the Ofsted online survey.