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Mrs Lisa Bradbury
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Dear Mrs Bradbury

Short inspection of Uffington Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 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 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. Since your arrival in September 2016, you have quickly identified areas for improvement, with a relentless drive to further raise achievement. You are highly ambitious for the school. Several staff members and parents described you as 'energetic' and 'phenomenal'. You have reinvigorated the staff team to ensure that everyone contributes to improving the school. Teaching assistants have benefited from valuable training to increase their expertise. In addition, you have worked well with the local authority and your local cluster of schools to share best practice and to further develop staff. This has led to more focused teaching, learning and assessment which meet the needs of different groups of pupils more effectively.

Leadership at all levels is strong. Governors, leaders and staff are extremely confident and highly supportive of your leadership style, not only in raising achievement, but also in galvanising the school within the local community. For example, leaders invited fathers into school to read with pupils as part of a quest to improve boys' reading skills. Leaders can confidently articulate your aims for the school. They have rapidly introduced new strategies to engage pupils in their learning. Governors visit regularly and have a very good and insightful understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. As a result, the school continues to be good and is improving.

The positive, supportive and caring ethos ensures that everyone is valued. Pupils of all ages play together happily. Strong and established routines ensure that pupils' behaviour is good and they feel safe. Pupils report that bullying is rare, but are very confident that all staff will help them if they have a concern. Pupils say that they are happy at school and value their new headteacher. Pupils recognise the importance of learning and their role in it. For example, in one class, pupils worked diligently for some time to solve a problem. One pupil said, 'We persevere when our work gets hard.'

Achievement continues to be good. The proportion of children in Reception reaching a good level of development is consistently above the national average. In the Year 1 phonics check, pupils' attainment has risen, so that last year the proportion meeting the expected standard was above the national average. In the 2016 national key stage 1 assessments, more pupils met or exceeded the expected standards for their age than others nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. However, last year pupils did not achieve as well as expected in key stage 2 writing and mathematics. You and your team have put in place a good range of strategies to address this underperformance. While current pupils are making good progress, you know that there is still some work to do so that pupils achieve the standards of which they are capable.

You have effectively addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. You have clearly identified pupils' needs and teachers use this well to accelerate their learning. Your new assessment systems ensure that you can accurately track groups of pupils' achievement.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is rightly your priority and you have ensured that a culture of vigilance prevails. Pupils' safety is always discussed at staff and governor meetings. Recruitment checks are fit for purpose. You provide ongoing training to staff and governors so that everyone knows what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. The school works well with outside agencies to support pupils and their families when required. Governors have a good knowledge of safeguarding and ensure that systems are reviewed and evaluated appropriately.

You promote safety in all that you do. Pupils have opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they can explain some of the dangers when using the internet. Around the school, staff are on hand to take care of pupils. Consequently, pupils feel safe and parents agree that their children are safe at school.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including: the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements; how the teaching of writing enables different groups of pupils to make good progress; the level of challenge for the most able pupils in mathematics; and how well leaders

and governors are improving pupils' attendance.

- The joint English leaders have made changes to how writing is taught. This includes a focus on helping pupils to generate more ideas, by creating opportunities for them to talk about their writing with each other. Rightly, you have taken advice from an external adviser to improve the teaching of writing, although it is too early to see the impact of this work. You noticed that boys in particular required some extra help with their motivation in writing and as a result you provided them with an exciting opportunity to work alongside an author. Leaders have a good understanding of pupils' progress and use this, and their secure subject knowledge, to support staff. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, now make good progress. Some make rapid progress. Nevertheless, you have rightly recognised that some middle-attaining pupils need to make accelerated rates of progress so that they achieve well.
- You and your team clearly identified the need to raise achievement in mathematics. You have trained teachers to more effectively meet the needs of pupils, especially the most able. Staff now ask more carefully worded questions to extend pupils' thinking and there are greater opportunities for problem-solving activities which improve pupils' reasoning. Teachers also encourage pupils to use more practical equipment to help them better understand important mathematical concepts. As a result, pupils, especially the most able, are making good progress. You know that you need to continue to embed this approach to ensure that more pupils make sustained and rapid progress.
- You are rightly determined that pupils' progress and well-being is not affected by poor attendance, including those who are disadvantaged. Staff communicate very clearly to parents how important it is that their children attend school regularly. You encourage good attendance in many ways, including through newsletters, assemblies and meeting parents. You rigorously monitor and check the attendance of groups of pupils and support parents when needed to ensure that their child's attendance improves. The governing body checks rates of absence on a regular basis because they rightly recognise that this is a key area to help further pupils' achievement. As a result of this relentless drive, attendance has improved and is at least in line with national figures for primary schools. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has also reduced.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is an increase in the proportion of pupils exceeding the standards expected for their age in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 so that it is at least in line with the national average
- high expectations are sustained in writing, particularly for the middle attaining pupils, in key stage 2, so that their rates of progress continue to accelerate.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Oxford, the regional schools commissioner and the director of

children's services for Oxfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Darren Aisthorpe
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, two middle leaders, five governors, a group of pupils and a representative of the local authority. I spoke with parents on the playground and considered 41 responses to Parent View, including 30 written comments. I took into account 11 responses to the staff questionnaire and 44 responses to the pupil questionnaire. Together with you, I observed teaching and learning in one class. I visited all other classes to see pupils' learning and looked at their English and mathematics books. I also observed pupils at breaktime and spoke with them informally. I considered a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding and pupils' progress.