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Mrs Fenella Reekie
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Dear Mrs Reekie

Short inspection of Cookham Dean CofE Aided 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 taking up post, you have brought fresh enthusiasm to Cookham Dean. You have the full support of your team who work well together under your leadership, aiming to provide the very best for all pupils. You have ensured that the school's Christian ethos remains strong. Pupils have a growing appreciation of the school's values and the importance you place on the '5 Rs': 'resilience, responsibility, readiness, resourcefulness and reflectiveness'. You have a thorough understanding of the school's effectiveness and have made appropriate plans to make the school even better. Staff share your vision and work hard to bring about successful change. Parents are hugely supportive of the school. They value your dedication in supporting their children's progress and development. They say the school provides a 'home from home' environment and report that their children 'are happy and making good progress under [your] leadership'.

Pupils at Cookham Dean are full of energy, excitement and cheerfulness. They enjoy learning and say lessons are 'fun and challenging'. Pupils' develop effective personal and social skills through the additional responsibilities they undertake. For example, pupils carry out the role of playground 'well-being ambassadors' with great enthusiasm. Pupils said that teachers look after them well, but that they enjoy looking after each other too.

Pupils enjoy taking part in a wide range of additional activities and clubs. For example, pupils in Year 5 were brimming with confidence as they busily rehearsed their singing for the school play. That said, pupils' cultural awareness is less developed. Leaders will need to address this to ensure that pupils are fully prepared for life in modern Britain.

You have maintained the good level of provision identified at your last inspection and have tackled the areas for improvement effectively. Pupils now develop their computing skills across many different subjects. You have adapted your curriculum to ensure that pupils build an effective range of mathematics skills. Pupils' writing has improved because opportunities to write outside of English lessons are broad.

Pupils continue to achieve well throughout the school. The proportion of pupils who achieve a good level of development in the early years consistently exceeds that seen nationally. By the end of Year 1, most pupils achieve the standard expected of them in phonics. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout key stage 1, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve the standard expected for their age in a range of subjects. Current pupils are making good progress from their starting points in a range of subjects. However, leaders are rightly striving to ensure that pupils' progress in mathematics continues to improve rapidly.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that arrangements to keep pupils safe are fit for purpose. All records are of a high quality, detailed and accurate. You ensure that when recruiting new staff members and volunteers all appropriate checks are made.

You are diligent in ensuring that all staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding. You have completed recent and up-to-date training to lead this area effectively. Staff understand their responsibilities and know what action to take if they have a concern about a pupil's safety or well-being. You are mindful to provide staff with regular updates and additional training, such as 'Keeping children safe from radicalisation', throughout the year. As a result, all staff know and understand how to keep pupils safe.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to ensure their personal safety. For example, they know how to keep themselves safe online and understand the dangers of sharing personal information. Pupils have good road-safety knowledge. They explained how older pupils walk alongside the younger children to help keep them safe on the walk to the local church.

Inspection findings

- Pupils of all abilities are now making good progress in mathematics. You have ensured that learning is briskly paced and that pupils are challenged

appropriately. Teachers make effective use of a suitable range of resources to help support pupils' mathematical learning. The most able pupils make good progress because they are frequently set tasks that require them to grapple with more difficult questions. Pupils who find mathematics difficult, or need to catch up, are supported well. That said, progress in mathematics in 2016, particularly in key stage 2, was not as strong as that in reading and writing.

- You are rightly continuing to make improvements in teaching and learning in mathematics a priority, to ensure that pupils' outcomes are consistently the best they can be. There is a growing emphasis on ensuring that pupils attain high levels of achievement from their starting points. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to provide accurate explanations. They use mathematical language appropriately when questioning pupils to assess their knowledge and understanding.
- You ensure that disadvantaged pupils, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make effective progress from their starting points. Sometimes pupils need extra help with their learning, at other times they require support for their well-being or self-esteem. Whatever the need, you are always quick to provide additional support to ensure that these pupils are ideally placed to achieve well.
- You have trained teaching assistants appropriately to provide good-quality support for those pupils who need additional help. They are particularly skilled when working with disadvantaged pupils, providing them with patient and nurturing assistance that helps build pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils respond well to their help and remain focused on their learning. They make good progress as a result.
- You have provided a wealth of opportunities for pupils to develop a thorough understanding of British values. You have taken considerable time to work with staff and governors to map the close ties between these values and the school's own ethos. As a result, you enable pupils to develop their understanding of British values through 'real life' experiences. For example, pupils know that they are exercising their democratic choice when they vote for the school council, or for the head girl and head boy.
- Pupils develop a firm moral understanding at Cookham Dean. They learn about sacrifices made by others by participating in events such as the recent re-dedication of the local war memorial. You use these occasions to help pupils develop a keen sense of right and wrong. That said, pupils' knowledge of the different cultures of the world is less sophisticated and you are rightly looking to develop this understanding.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- by further developing teaching and learning, pupils' progress in mathematics continues to accelerate

- every opportunity is taken to enhance pupils' cultural development and ensure that pupils are ready for of life in modern Britain.

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 Windsor and Maidenhead. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dom Cook

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I observed learning in most classes, spoke to pupils and looked at work in their exercise books. Observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher. Meetings were held with subject leaders and four members of the governing body. I met with representatives from the local authority and the diocese. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and took into account 104 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 93 written comments. I also analysed nine responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 112 responses to the pupil survey. A range of documents were reviewed, including: the school's development plan; leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness; information about pupils' achievement; the governing body's reports; the local authority's reports; and records concerning pupils' attendance, behaviour and safety.