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Mr Christian Hamilton
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hamilton

Short inspection of Clent Parochial Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 April 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There has been a significant change in staffing, including changes to the majority of the school's leadership team, since the last inspection. Your drive, determination and strong leadership have continued to move the school forward through these changes, which you have managed extremely well. You have developed a close-knit staff team who work together well. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning remains good across the school.

Pupils at Clent Parochial primary school are mature, considerate and well-rounded individuals. They show a deep sense of care for one another. Your strong focus on developing pupils' understanding of the school's values, including the Christian values, ensures that pupils show a deep level of respect and tolerance for all. This is to be highly commended. You do not shy away from helping pupils to understand about current issues across the world. For example, pupils were taught about the Syrian crisis in an assembly. Behaviour in lessons, around the school and during breaktimes is exemplary. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they are given and show they are willing to take responsibility. For example, they have the opportunity to be elected onto the school council and the eco council, and Year 6 pupils are appointed as 'buddies' for children in the early years.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. The majority of parents who

responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire strongly agreed with every question. Parents appreciate the school's open door policy and one parent spoke for many by saying, 'The caring nature of the school and staff rubs off on the children and there is a real family atmosphere in the school.'

Following the last inspection you were asked to improve communications with parents. You and the governors have successfully achieved this. The governors have developed a 'parents' committee' to liaise with, and take views from, parents. Leaders undertake regular parental questionnaires, with focus groups set up to tackle issues identified from the questionnaires. For example, parental concerns about uniform and homework were addressed effectively. Parents are encouraged to actively participate in developing the school for the benefit of the pupils.

You were also asked to develop the wider leadership of the school, including the early years. You successfully developed the leadership team following the last inspection. However, owing to promotions and staffing changes over the last three years, you have had to start the process of developing the leadership team once again. You are effectively supporting school leaders, but they are still relatively new to their roles. Consequently, this remains a key priority for the school. The leadership of the early years is strong. The leader has developed exceptional provision within the early years, with children making excellent progress.

A further development area from the last inspection was to ensure that teaching consistently matches the exceptional quality of the best. Again, owing to significant staffing changes, very few teachers who were at the last inspection remain. You have managed the changes in staffing extremely well to ensure that the overall quality of teaching and learning remains good. However, the teaching of writing is not yet as effective as it should be. Tasks to develop pupils' skills in writing are not consistently well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers do not regularly provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils to ensure that they make the progress in writing of which they are capable. You have recognised this and have detailed plans in place to address and develop this area.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality. Leaders monitor safeguarding arrangements rigorously to ensure that the school is providing a safe environment for all pupils. Where improvements to safeguarding are identified, action is taken quickly. For example, new school fencing has been installed to improve site security.

Pupils have a deep understanding about how to keep themselves safe. You place a high priority on personal, social and health education. This includes using specialist resources from organisations such as the NSPCC to help pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and what to do if they are being bullied. 'Worry boxes' in classes enable pupils to share any concerns they may have.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have placed a strong emphasis on providing a broad, balanced and creative curriculum to ensure that pupils have a well-rounded education. Teaching is supplemented by a range of trips, visits and activities to bring learning to life. For example, pupils learned about healthy eating by considering what food might have been on the plate of a person living in the time of the Stone Age. Year 5 and 6 pupils held a dinner and dance afternoon to recreate the experiences of passengers on the Titanic.
- Governance of the school is very effective and provides a high level of both support and challenge to school leaders. Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's performance and areas for development. They scrutinise information in detail, including current progress data, to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken to improve outcomes for pupils. Governors have ensured that there are a range of skills across the governing body, and that these skills are utilised to the greatest effect on the various committees.
- Teachers place a high priority on the teaching of reading, which is a strength of the school. Pupils show a love of reading and speak highly of the level of support and challenge they receive. They read widely and often in school, including to a range of adults. Pupils value the opportunities they are given to read aloud in class. Books are very well matched to pupils' abilities and they use their phonic knowledge very effectively to read unfamiliar words. Pupils are clear about what they need to improve in their reading and work hard to focus on these development areas. As a result, pupils are making good progress across the school in reading.
- The early years provision is exceptional and children are given an excellent start to school life. Leaders and staff work closely together to ensure that the learning environments, both indoor and out, are stimulating and developmental. Staff know the children's needs in great detail and expertly adapt their planning to meet those needs. A focus on children's personal, social and emotional development results in the children gaining the skills needed to become keen learners. Highly personalised and purposeful learning activities enable the children to thrive. Learning journeys follow the progress of the children in detail and are shared fortnightly with parents. In the early years parents are provided with opportunities to be fully involved in their children's learning. This includes 'stay and play' sessions, where parents are shown how to further support their children's learning at home. As a result, children make excellent progress across the early years and are exceptionally well prepared for key stage 1.
- In 2016, pupils' progress in writing at the end of key stage 2 was below national averages. In addition to this, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels of performance was also below national averages. Pupils' work in books currently, especially that of the most able, also indicates that pupils are not making the progress of which they are fully capable. Where the teaching of writing is strong, all pupils are effectively challenged and work is matched closely to individual needs. However, this is not consistent across the school. In particular, teachers do not match work in writing well enough to the needs of the

most able pupils.

- There are too many occasions where pupils are expected to write only individual words or short sentences, rather than being given the opportunity to extend their ideas and thoughts and hence develop their writing skills. As a result pupils across the school, especially the most able, are not making the progress of which they are capable and are not achieving greater depth in their writing. Leaders have recognised this and plans are in place to develop writing across the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders at all levels, particularly those still relatively new to their roles, receive further support and training to enhance their skills to drive school improvement
- the teaching of writing is planned to meet the needs of all pupils and includes a high level of challenge, especially for the most able, so that pupils make the progress of which they are capable.

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

Yours sincerely

Ann Pritchard
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection I met with you, senior teachers and members of the governing body. You joined me on brief visits to lessons. I talked to pupils about their learning and looked at examples of their work. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and to pupils at breaktimes. I reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's own evaluation of its performance, the school development plan, documents relating to keeping pupils safe, documents relating to governance, attendance figures and the most recent information about pupils' achievement. I considered 41 responses from the Ofsted online questionnaire from parents. There were no responses from the staff or pupils' questionnaire.