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Mrs Katie Gray
Executive Headteacher
Farway Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mrs Gray

Short inspection of Farway Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 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 January 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The last five years have been a turbulent time for the school but, through this time, governors have sought to secure stability and high-quality education for the pupils. Since joining The Jubilee Federation, a partnership with Branscombe Church of England Primary School and Broadhembury Church of England Primary School, the school has benefited from your strong leadership, which has resulted in many improvements. You have been swift to bring in specialist support from other schools in the federation and from external organisations, for example to improve the quality of teaching of mathematics to meet the new national expectations. This was an area for improvement at the previous inspection and staff are clear about the standards that pupils should be working at. Consequently, pupils are making good progress in their mathematics.

Despite the small number of pupils, staff ensure that they do not miss out on the experiences they might encounter in a larger school. In lessons, pupils work in small groups to ensure their learning is appropriate for their age. Teaching assistants are highly effective in tailoring work to the needs of individual pupils. Pupils show good attitudes to their learning and make good progress in most subjects. Your head of teaching and learning plans sporting activities across the federation so pupils can be part of teams in competitions and participate in a wide range of sports.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding records are adequately maintained, and the arrangements to keep children safe are strong. The welfare arrangements for children in the early years are good. All protocols are followed and logged, such as nappy-changing arrangements for some of the youngest children.

Pupils are safe. Staff and governors are appropriately trained and so are aware of the range of risks pupils may face and the signs to look out for, including from extremism and child sexual exploitation. Pupils explained to me how to stay safe when they are online, and older pupils talked knowledgably about recent events, such as the terrorist attack in London. Every pupil knew who they would speak to if they had any concerns or worries. Some said they were worried in the past, but not anymore because staff have helped them. Year 6 pupils feel well prepared for moving on to secondary school.

Pupils were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the caring nature of the school, the fact that there is no bullying and all would recommend the school to others. Pupils who are new to the school feel warmly welcomed and settle in quickly. Parents who completed Parent View all agreed that their children were happy and safe at school.

Inspection findings

At the start of the inspection, we agreed the areas that this short inspection would focus on. These included the design of the curriculum, the progress towards the age-related expectations of the national curriculum, the impact that the sport premium is having, the effectiveness of the early years provision and the attendance of pupils.

- The curriculum is well planned. You have drawn on the support of specialist advisers to design a programme of learning for each year group that meets the requirements of the national curriculum. You recognise that there is more work to do as you reflect on the success of various initiatives, but pupils are on track in all year groups to reach the expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. The new scheme of learning and teachers' planning are resulting in pupils having deeper understanding about the application of their mathematical knowledge. For example, Year 6 pupils are able to identify the steps they need to take to solve complex problems. Consequently, the majority of pupils are on track to reach the expected standard for their age in mathematics, and some pupils are on track to exceed this.
- Teaching staff have a clear understanding of the expected standards in writing. They carefully craft learning activities to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to write in a variety of styles and use a wide range of techniques. Pupils have a secure understanding of grammar, and use dictionaries to help them with their spelling. Homework is used effectively to improve pupils' literacy skills. Pupils' progress in writing is improving.
- Topic work explores a range of subjects, and pupils show a secure understanding of historical events, the environment and technology. While pupils study a wide

range of subjects, the high standards of literacy seen in English books are not replicated in this work.

- Governors ensure that the sport premium is used to good effect and monitor the impact this additional funding has. As a result of the specialist teaching pupils receive in their physical education lessons, they make good progress, especially in dance. At lunchtime, pupils play sports well together, organising themselves into mixed-age teams and competing against each other. As the school is small, leaders actively pursue opportunities for pupils to join teams with other small schools to play in competitions. Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities to participate in sports across the federation and the local cluster of schools, such as in the federation Olympics. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully involved in sporting activities and take part in carefully designed events and competitions with other schools in the local area. Leaders continue to raise the profile of sport by training teaching staff, engaging specialist coaches and arranging visitors, such as an Olympic athlete to talk with pupils.
- Governors opened the Nursery/Reception class in January 2013. The activities staff plan allow children to develop skills appropriate for their age and stage of development. Children interact well with one another and with adults. Nursery children recognise shapes and individual letters. They enjoy practising sounding out individual letters. Children in the Reception Year are developing their phonics skills and can write their names legibly, and many are beginning to write sentences. Learning journals are comprehensive and well maintained. They reflect accurately what children know, understand and can do. Children in the early years are making strong progress. Some are making rapid progress as a result of the good teaching and support they receive, including from specialists such as for speech and language. Most children in Reception are on track to reach a good level of development by the end of the summer term, and so are ready to move in to Year 1.
- The statutory requirements for early years settings are met. The ratios of staff to children are high, and staff are trained to an appropriate level. Routines are well established, for example children are very clear that they must wash their hands before they eat lunch.
- Attendance has been declining over the last three years. While attendance this academic year has improved, it is still below the national average. Leaders remind parents that pupils should not be taken out of school for holidays; however, attendance records show that this continues. Attendance, therefore, remains too low.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the expectations of the quality of pupils' writing in their topic work are as high as in English
- pupils' attendance improves.

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

Yours sincerely

Iain Freeland
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, you joined me observing learning and looking at pupils' work. I spoke with pupils in lessons and at lunchtime. I met with two governors and spoke with the chair of governors, separately, by telephone. I also spoke with an officer of the local authority.

I scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation and development plan, assessment information, attendance registers, behaviour logs, and safeguarding records. I considered the views of eight parents who responded to Parent View and the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires of eight pupils.