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Mrs Penny Paske
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Dear Mrs Paske

Short inspection of Northleach 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 March 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 January 2016, you have led the school sensibly and sensitively through a difficult time of change. Your leadership has ensured that the communal spirit of the staff has remained positive, which has helped the pupils to maintain their good achievements. You recognise the importance of the school within the local community and are working to support pupils in a wrap-around care system which will benefit both pupils and community members.

You have focused relentlessly on improving the quality of teaching so that pupils' achievement continues to improve. You are ably assisted by two senior leaders who are in charge of English and mathematics. In addition, you have put experienced teachers in charge of subjects in the wider curriculum so that their expertise is spread into key stages 1 and 2 and not just the class they teach. This has improved extended writing in these areas, in particular science and religious education. Pupils use the skills gained in the core subjects to support their work in these areas and this helps them to make more rapid progress. Monitoring of subject areas is covered successfully by school leaders and governors hold leaders to account stringently.

At the last inspection, leaders were asked to make sure that pupils are made aware of their errors and given time to correct them. Systems have been evaluated, especially in key stage 2, and teachers and teaching assistants intervene when

pupils hold misconceptions and help them understand. Equally, teaching is adjusted to support those who are struggling so that they can acquire the skills to put them back on track efficiently.

Safeguarding is effective.

You are vigilant in your care for the health and safety of the pupils in the school and have made sure that all staff hold the same principles. This has created a positive culture of safety. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and child protection records are detailed and of high quality. The safeguarding policy is very comprehensive. Staff are trained in how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation and the influence of radical or extreme views. Staff work sensitively with parents and external agencies to monitor and support any vulnerable pupils.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed on the areas that would be considered. One of these was the progress that pupils are making in writing and mathematics. Although attainment in the end-of-year tests at key stages 1 and 2 was above national averages, progress at key stage 2 was in the lowest 25% nationally for writing and the lowest 40% for mathematics. By making sure that more extended writing is taking place in the full range of subjects at key stage 2, pupils are becoming proficient in learning the structure and techniques required for different genres. Within mathematics, teachers have raised expectations and are introducing more problem-solving and reasoning into the work studied, and this is enabling pupils to be more skilled in the complex problems that are associated with the higher standard. In most classes, consideration is given to challenging pupils to strive for the best in their work. The older pupils have work that stretches them more in writing and mathematics, depending on their ability, and this successful practice is something you wish to deliver throughout key stage 2 and in key stage 1 as well.
- Another area that was investigated was the difference in progress between disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and other pupils nationally. You have made sure that staff are aware of these pupils and their particular needs so that when interventions happen, they are evaluated constantly to make sure that they are having an impact on progress. These pupils have the same opportunities in the school and benefit from strong support that is helping them to be successful in the future.
- We discussed the dip in attendance and increase in the persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Your vigilance in making sure that pupils attend is equal to your regard for safeguarding and, as a consequence, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is now better than the national average. For those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, there has also been significant improvement.
- Following the relatively poor outcomes in the early years in 2016, we looked at the progress that current pupils in Reception and Year 1 are making. Although

pupils are engaged in their learning and stimulated by the activities provided, you are aware that these children are capable of more and need to be stretched on a regular basis so that their number and writing skills are secure. This will ensure that pupils maximise their potential and make successful progress from their different starting points.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- work in the foundation stage and key stage 1 improves further, particularly letter and number formation, use of phonic knowledge when writing and more challenging problems in numeracy
- the successful practice of pupils having different levels of challenge is delivered in the full range of subjects throughout key stage 2 and in key stage 1.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, you joined me observing learning in classrooms. We looked at a number of pupils' books. I spoke with pupils formally and while playing before the start of the day. At that time, too, I met with a number of parents. Meetings were held with you, senior leaders and four governors. I spoke with an officer from the local authority.

I scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation and development plan, and safeguarding records. I considered the views of 38 parents who responded to Parent View and 22 comments written by parents, plus the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires of 19 pupils and seven members of staff.