

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



7 April 2017

Mrs Mary See
Acting Headteacher
Cheselbourne Village School
Cheselbourne
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 7NT

Dear Mrs See

Short inspection of Cheselbourne Village School

Following my visit to the school on 16 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 previous inspection. The years since the previous inspection have seen a number of new staff join the school, including you as senior teacher. Since January 2017, you have taken on the role of acting headteacher in the absence of your colleague. Supported by the strong governing body and the local authority, you have continued the journey of improvement. There is a clear strategy to ensure that pupils continue to make good progress.

You have also worked with the headteacher in increasing the number of opportunities for pupils to be engaged in after-school events. Parents speak positively about this aspect of the school's provision. They commend the personal role you have taken in involving parents and the community in the life of the school by, for example, re-establishing fundraising events.

Pupils are enthusiastic about learning. They welcome visitors warmly, are keen to share their work and speak confidently about their learning and what they need to do to improve further. They focus well in class and are respectful of others' views and responses. Pupils enjoy school. One parent, typical of many, commented that her children 'run into school in the morning'. Pupils share excitedly what they have learned during the day. Parents and pupils were enthusiastic about the enrichment activities provided, such as the collaborative music concert.

You have developed an impressive mathematics programme in response to the area

for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Teachers are now skilled at planning interesting opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills. You have provided a focus around mathematics at key events in the school year, for example calculating budgets at Christmas time and speed and distance at sports day. You have also created opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum, such as children in Reception weighing and measuring model dinosaurs and everyday objects. As a result, pupils are making strong progress in their mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

The culture of the school is one where every member of staff and volunteer is aware of their responsibilities to safeguard pupils. They receive regular training and support. Leaders with specific responsibility for safeguarding and all staff are rigorous in their engagement with external agencies to ensure that concerns are followed up. Pupils say they feel safe and supported at the school. They support one another well if they have a concern or worry. Risk assessments are thorough and briefings given to pupils before events are carried out regularly. Pupils are active participants in this process and develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe as a result.

Documentation demonstrates that staff carry out thorough checks to ensure that the school is a safe place to be. Responses by staff and parents to Ofsted's questionnaires agree that children are safe and well cared for.

Inspection findings

- My first key line of enquiry explored the security of leadership in the school. You and other staff are providing strong leadership of learning. The headteacher has been absent for some time and throughout this period you have ensured that pupils continue to make good progress. Staff work well together to ensure that the school remains a safe place which focuses on the progress pupils make in their learning. More recently, governors have worked effectively with the local authority to ensure that the acting leadership team is well supported. They have employed an experienced national leader of education (NLE) to provide support to you in your leadership role. In a short space of time, you have built a strong team and remained focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, the progress that pupils are making has been maintained.
- Furthermore, the newly appointed chair of governors brings a wealth of experience and skills to the role. She has quickly got to grips with the school's priorities for development. The governing body has been strengthened by the appointment of new governors who bring specific skills. Careful thought has been given to ensuring succession planning to secure the future of governance.
- My second trail focused on pupils' progress in writing. In 2016, pupils did not make as much progress in writing at key stage 1 as they did in reading and mathematics. Boys, in particular, did not make progress as rapidly as girls. You have undertaken close analysis of performance information to identify specifically where there are shortcomings in pupils' writing. Your analysis revealed specific

areas where pupils needed support and you have put in place greater opportunities for boys, as well as girls, to succeed. For example, you have targeted fine motor skills in the early years, with children engaging in sewing, model-making and fine sketching to develop pen holding, before graduating on to writing with sticks and stones to teach correct letter formation.

- The enthusiasm of formerly reluctant boys to engage in writing is evident. Pupils talk about the positive effect of monthly writing tasks. Your analysis has also ensured that pupils are challenged in their writing and this is evident in classrooms and in books. As a result, pupils, and especially boys, are making more rapid progress in key stage 1.
- My next trail examined pupils' progress in reading. Across the school, you have engaged pupils and parents in the importance of reading regularly. In addition, you have given pupils more structure to their reading and provided progression routes so that they take greater ownership of their own reading. Pupils engage in reading throughout the school and the rapid progress they are making means more pupils are on track to meet or exceed the expectations for their age.
- My final trail explored the effectiveness of leaders in improving the achievement of the most able pupils in mathematics. These pupils are challenged more regularly than previously, following the introduction of systematic teaching across the school in mathematics. Careful analysis of progress against learning objectives means that teachers throughout the school are able to diagnose pupils' learning needs more effectively and apply centrally developed resources to ensure that they make progress; for example, the 'concrete–pictorial–abstract' approach to teaching, which you have developed in your capacity as the leader for mathematics. This whole-school approach is having a positive impact on pupils' ability to solve problems in mathematics, with pupils making accelerated progress and a greater number are on track to reach greater depth in their learning at the end of each key stage.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers plan learning that challenges pupils to apply their reasoning skills and solve problems in subjects across the curriculum
- teachers build on the rapid progress made by pupils in writing at key stage 1 in Years 3 and 4.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Shanks
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, you joined me to observe learning in classrooms. We looked at a large number of pupils' books covering a wide range of subjects. I heard pupils of differing abilities read.

I held meetings with senior leaders, the national leader of education, the school improvement lead for the local authority and two governors. I scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation and development plan, safeguarding and child protection records, and the school's assessment information.

I spoke with pupils in classes as well as at break- and lunchtime to talk about their experience of school, and considered the responses of 28 pupils to Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also took into account the views of 24 parents who responded to Parent View and of seven staff. I also spoke with parents at the start of the school day and read one letter from a parent.