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Mrs Anna Martin and Mrs Sarah Helm
Co-headteachers
Christ Church, Church of England Infant School
Christchurch Avenue
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Dear Mrs Martin and Mrs Helm

Short inspection of Christ Church, Church of England Infant School, Downend

Following my visit to the school on 4 April 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 previous inspection. Despite the high turnover of staff in recent years, including changes to the senior leaders and subject leadership, the two co-headteachers have worked in harmony to ensure that the school's core values of being 'caring, courageous and inspired' have not been lost. It has a warm, friendly and caring atmosphere, which makes it a happy place to learn. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the individual attention from each teacher, and this enables them to develop confidence and self-esteem. Nearly all parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire would recommend this school. Their views can be summed up by one parent who explained, 'This school is amazing! My daughter loves the variety of learning and I see her thriving every day. The staff here are fantastic, they go way above and beyond what is expected of them... I would recommend this school a million times over.'

At the time of the previous inspection, the school was asked to improve the progress that pupils make in mathematics. There is now a greater emphasis on helping pupils to develop key mathematical skills. This, together with the use of practical resources and interesting challenges, supports their thinking and enables them to extend their learning. Working closely with other schools to compare and moderate work has also helped teachers to gain a better understanding of age-related expectations and to challenge their pupils more deeply.

At the time of the previous inspection, the school was asked to enthuse and engage pupils more in their learning. Teachers have developed a better understanding of the need to vary activities and teaching styles. For example, different levels of challenge, including 'mystery challenges' in mathematics, successfully motivate the pupils to think deeply about their learning. Opportunities to write about topics in greater detail enable pupils to extend their writing skills and develop their accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils report that they feel safe in school and are very clear that they can approach any adult in school if they have a worry or a concern. They explain that it is not safe to run in school corridors because they might trip and hurt themselves or cause an accident. Pupils are also very clear about handling equipment safely so that they do not harm anyone. They demonstrate a secure understanding of how to keep safe when using new technologies and know that they must not give out personal details to anyone who makes contact with them online. Parents who responded to the online inspection questionnaire unanimously agree that 'there is a genuine concern for children and their well-being; ...they are in safe hands'.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff and governors have completed all relevant training, including the prevention of extremism, radicalisation, female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation. Pupils are kept safe on the school site and when they go out on school trips and visits. However, although processes for recruitment and vetting are thorough, in the past, some of the essential information collected from each successful applicant has not always been collated systematically. Although this is being steadily rectified, a few records remain partially complete.

Inspection findings

- In the 2016 national tests at the end of Year 2, a significant proportion of pupils did not do as well as was expected, given their end-of-Reception outcomes. My first line of enquiry was to check how you ensure that the children in Reception are assessed accurately against the progress that they make. In our visits to the Reception classes, we saw how the children were making strong progress in their key skills. Children who find concepts challenging are given additional help to ensure that they grasp and consolidate their knowledge and understanding. Early years staff make effective use of resources to support the children in all areas of learning. By working closely with other schools, teachers share their children's assessments and moderate each other's work. Annual moderation is carried out by the local authority officers who confirm the accuracy of the end-of-Reception-year assessments.
- Given that those pupils who are disadvantaged, including those who are most able, did not do as well as their peers in the 2016 Reception assessments, the Year 2 national tests or the Year 1 phonics check, my second line of enquiry was to explore how you are tackling this to ensure that their progress is being accelerated. You have skilfully managed a significant number of staff changes in

Years 1 and 2 and rectified inconsistencies in teaching by managing and supporting teachers' performance robustly. Governors have supported you well in this. As a result of visits to outstanding schools and high-quality training, teachers' expectations in Years 1 and 2 have been raised. They now have a greater understanding of what their pupils can achieve and ensure that their teaching fully meets pupils' needs over time.

- Disadvantaged pupils are strategically positioned in lessons so that they do not miss a moment of learning time. The marking of their books is prioritised each day. Extra, focused sessions, specifically planned for these pupils, help them to consolidate their learning or to have extra time to extend their thinking. The recent appointment of a new coordinator for disadvantaged pupils, coupled with the oversight of a knowledgeable governor, has brought with it greater rigour and accountability. Current work shows that disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able, are now making much better progress. They are working much more closely to the expected standard for their age in reading, writing and mathematics, and some are exceeding this standard.
- My final line of enquiry was to explore how well you, in your role as co-headteachers, ensure a consistency of approach to the leadership of the school. It is clear that you are a cohesive partnership and use your individual skills to complement each other's work. Pivotal to your success is the way in which you keep in close communication with each other and maintain a clear and unchallengeable trail of actions, using emails and discussion notes. You are both confident that the recent changes to the structure of the senior leadership team and the appointment of new subject leaders for English and mathematics have already started to strengthen the effectiveness of the school. However, you are both fully aware that these staff changes and the initiatives introduced this year still need time to be fully implemented.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recent changes to leadership and the initiatives which have been introduced during the past year become firmly rooted in everyday practice
- administrative systems for recording the recruitment and vetting of staff are maintained in a systematic way and regularly checked for consistency.

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

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you both and we talked about the improvements that had been made since the previous inspection. I also considered your self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I looked at all safeguarding records and explored your recruitment and vetting procedures. I held a discussion with four senior and middle leaders. I met with six governors, including the chair of the governing body, and had a telephone conversation with your school improvement officer. Together, we visited all the classes and looked at some pupils' books. I had a discussion with six Year 2 pupils. I considered the 82 responses submitted by parents through Parent View. I also considered 13 responses from the online staff questionnaire and 29 from the online pupil questionnaire.