

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mr J Gilbert  
Amberley CofE First School  
School Road  
Amberley  
Arundel  
West Sussex  
BN18 9NB

Dear Mr Gilbert

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Amberley CofE First School**

Following my visit to your school on 28 April 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that leaders provide governors with even clearer information about pupils' attendance and children's progress in the early years.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the governing body and representatives of the local authority and the diocese to discuss the actions taken since the previous inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I spoke to parents before school and pupils at breaktime. I spoke to pupils in all classes about their learning and looked at the work in their books. I reviewed

leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning, information about pupils' progress and leaders' reports to the governing body.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection, a new early years teacher has joined the school. The school will become a primary school in September 2017, with the addition of Year 6 pupils. The governing body has a new chair and vice-chair.

## **Main findings**

Leaders have taken swift and effective action in response to the findings from the previous inspection. Plans for improvement have the right priorities and are clear about what success will look like. Governors are proving to be effective in holding leaders to account for the improvements that are required. You have developed the roles of senior staff to focus on improvements in teaching and learning, for example through leading the work of teaching assistants. Parents are positive about the work of the school and recognise the improvements you are making.

A review of pupil premium spending was undertaken soon after the inspection. Governors now understand how the additional funding is spent and carefully track the difference it is making. Your new systems for tracking pupils' progress, including those who are disadvantaged, are clear and effective. Leaders and governors now have a detailed understanding of which groups of pupils are making good progress. You have improved the attendance levels of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.

Teachers are now using progress information more effectively to plan learning that builds on what pupils know and can do. Due attention is given to the needs of specific groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who need to catch up. As a result, pupils are making better progress. This was shown as early as July 2016, when pupils at the end of Year 2 achieved at least as well as other pupils nationally, including those pupils who had not reached a good level of development at the end of Reception. Teachers ensure that pupils know what is expected of them and what they need to do to improve their learning further, including in mathematics.

You look closely at the quality of teaching carefully and analyse the progress that pupils are making in a range of ways. You provide teachers with helpful feedback about what is working well and what could be even better. Advisers from the local authority and diocese have looked at teaching and learning with you across the school and this has strengthened your evaluation. You have provided valuable opportunities for staff at Amberley to work with staff at St James CofE Primary School, Coldwaltham – a good school where you are also the headteacher.

Governors know the school well. They spend time in the school focusing on the

priorities in the school's improvement plan. They seek first-hand information to test out what leaders are telling them. For example, governors talk to pupils about their learning and how adults are helping them to progress. Governors have seen how the links that you have made with other schools around the world help enhance pupils' cultural development. However, governors need more precise information about the progress of children in the early years and about pupils' attendance to be even more effective.

Staff have made improvements to the learning environment in the early years. Children are now given more opportunities to learn independently both inside and outdoors. All adults make a positive contribution to teaching and learning. Regular local authority visits have been invaluable in supporting leaders' evaluation of what improvements are still required in the early years. For example, you have identified that staff would benefit from visiting different early years provision in other schools.

### **External support**

The local authority and diocese have responded promptly to the previous inspection findings. They work well together, including when they undertake joint reviews of the school's effectiveness. School leaders value and work closely with those providing external support.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Chichester and the director of children's services for West Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Cole  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**