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Mr Luke Owen
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Dear Mr Owen

Short inspection of Marshwood CofE Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 16 May 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in January 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 2015, you have worked tirelessly to make sure that pupils are receiving a good level of education. You have been ably assisted in this by the executive headteacher of the multi-academy trust. Together, you have ensured that pupils experience a rich curriculum, both in school and out. You have developed outside facilities so that pupils enjoy more space for creative and physical activities. Inside, you have made the most of the historical building and provided places for quiet contemplation, such as the library. As one parent commented: 'The school offers the most enriched learning environment for my children and they absolutely love sharing their school experiences at home.'

Most teachers are new to the school and some are new to the profession. You have focused relentlessly on improving the quality of teaching and pupils continue to make good progress. You are ably assisted by a middle leader responsible for literacy and special educational needs and/or disabilities. This experienced leader is making significant improvements to pupils' reading, writing, spelling and grammatical knowledge. However, there are still issues with the presentation of pupils' work and there are too many careless errors that go unchecked. You and your middle leader are aware that there is more to do to ensure that pupils in each year group are making progress that reflects their potential and presenting flawless

work. Together, you have put support and action plans in place to guarantee this happens rapidly.

You have ensured that professional development to make teaching consistently good has been introduced. As a result, teachers gain confidence in their practice and pupils thrive on the challenges and support received. Outcomes for the pupils are improving steadily. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of the curriculum, which is giving pupils a reliable bedrock before moving on through the school. In addition, there has been coordinated work with other primary schools in the multi-academy trust. This has provided capacity at subject and leadership level which you and the staff have appreciated. This extra capacity is vital for the continued improvement of the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You make sure that pupils are safe and secure in the school at all times. You and the executive headteacher have raised expectations with regard to safeguarding practices and supported staff in having a better understanding of how to assess risks consistently. This has created a strong culture of safety. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and child protection records are detailed and of high quality. The safeguarding policy is up to date and very comprehensive. The most recent Department for Education guidelines are on the website, which has all the necessary information about safeguarding. Staff are trained in how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, and from the influence of radical or extreme views. You 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. Initially, we focused on the improvements needed in writing, spelling and grammar. You explained that there has been a focus on writing in literacy lessons as well as in cross-curricular work. This was evidenced in the way pupils were writing about the Romans and using their historical knowledge to write successfully in a range of genres. Equally, the topics chosen by teachers reflect the pupils' interests and this helps to engage them continually. Pupils work on grammatical structures that are relevant to their written work and apply them effectively within their writing. Consequently, pupils see the purpose of grammar and punctuation and they find this helpful. There has been some concentrated work in phonics for pupils in Years 3 and 4 to boost their spelling and bring it in line with current age-related expectations. Teachers assess the progress pupils make effectively and guide them well when they are unsure. In this way, pupils make progress but the middle-attaining and most able pupils could still be challenged further in their thinking and writing.
- Next, we looked at the improvements made to ensure the better progress of pupils in key stage 1. There are two new teachers in this phase. They make a good team and are energised by finding the best solutions for pupils who are struggling. The initiatives undertaken by these teachers are bearing fruit and

many pupils are achieving age-related expectations. Several pupils needed to improve their fine motor skills so that their handwriting became more legible and neater. The exercises undertaken by these pupils are leading to clear improvements in their handwriting. There is a high number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in these year groups. The new coordinator for special educational needs and/or disabilities has reviewed the support for these pupils and engaged further assessments from outside agencies when necessary so that individual needs can be met that assure the appropriate progress is made. Teachers in key stage 1 consider the changes in practice required and good interventions are made when necessary so that pupils' skills develop more rapidly. Teachers know the pupils well and use their expertise to judge when pupils need extra time or are ready to move on in their learning. This has a positive impact on the progress made by pupils.

- Finally, we looked at the progress of children in the early years foundation stage. The outside area has been enhanced for the Reception children. They are given activities which extend their thinking and challenge them with new concepts. For example, children outside were measuring the height of tomato plants in centimetres. Children inside were focused on buying products and dealing with addition and subtraction with decimal coins, as well as a range of other activities which included reading and phonics work. Both boys and girls are developing equally well this year as teachers and teaching assistants consider and evaluate the activities purposefully. There is scope to improve writing further by offering more opportunities for children to record what they are doing. This would add depth to the work and ensure that more Reception children exceed expectations in their early learning goals.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- capacity for leadership is maintained to ensure progress continues to be rapid
- teaching improves so that:
 - pupils are provided with challenge to deepen their thinking in the core and wider curriculum
 - pupils make the best use of their literacy skills when writing at greater depth.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Salisbury, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Dorset. 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 and the executive headteacher joined me observing learning in classrooms. We looked at a number of pupils' books. I met with several parents before school. Meetings were held with you, the literacy leader and governors.

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 23 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 11 comments written by parents.