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Mrs Carol Murray
Headteacher
Churchstanton Primary School
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Dear Mrs Murray

Short inspection of Churchstanton Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 18 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 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. Along with your teachers and governors, you are dedicated to ensuring that pupils enjoy an interesting and exciting curriculum. For example, you make effective use of the school grounds and woods. You have high expectations of the pupils, and this serves them well to make good progress. Another key characteristic of the school is the supportive and inclusive ethos which permeates the work of the school and is strongly recognised by pupils, parents and staff alike. One parent, whose view was typical, commented, 'The school is a big family which genuinely cares and nurtures its students. My daughter is very happy here ... she is encouraged and flourishing.'

You and your staff know the pupils very well. As a result, you plan learning activities that are well suited to pupils' individual needs. You are diligent in checking pupils' progress and intervene quickly if they start falling behind or need to catch up. Children get a strong start in the early years foundation stage which ensures they are set up well for starting school. You hold others to account to tackle weaknesses in teaching and to ensure that pupils continue to receive a good education. These are all key strengths in the work of the school. However, the school is not yet outstanding because there are still some inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' work and the application of mathematics and writing skills across the curriculum.

Since the previous inspection, you have been effective in improving pupils' outcomes. There have been considerable improvements in the teaching of phonics,

evident in national test results in key stage 1. Children's outcomes at the end of their Reception Year, as well as the pupils' use and understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling at the end of key stage 2, have also improved. You have achieved this because you know the school's priorities well and work effectively with a diligent and skilled staff. Furthermore, you have successfully tackled the areas for improvement from the school's previous inspection, especially in ensuring teachers use assessment information well and check pupils' progress so that the pupils can make good progress across the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff are determined and diligent in keeping children safe. You ensure there is a strong culture of safeguarding because you train staff well and teach pupils effectively about various types of risks, harm and hazards. For example, children in Year 2 know how to stay safe online and the kind of personal information they must never share or divulge. Staff know how to record and pass on any concerns to the school's designated safeguarding leaders. You and other leaders take prompt and effective action to keep children safe, including in working with other external agencies and organisations. You are proactive in taking the lead and will challenge other professional partners if you feel this is in the best interests of the children, for example in ensuring children do not become 'missing in education'.

The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of a high quality. This includes training for staff, as well as various employment checks and vetting arrangements. Currently governors are working with you in finalising plans to ensure that the school's grounds are even more secure through reviewing the fencing next to the road. Pupils feel safe and trust staff because they recognise that all staff take their welfare and concerns seriously. You and all other staff work quickly to resolve issues for the children so that they feel valued and respected. This is reflected in the way that pupils treat each other and conduct themselves around the school to build healthy and harmonious relationships.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry focused on how well you enable all individuals and groups to achieve well. You do this through having strong routines and processes for checking the progress of pupils. You meet as a team of teachers and hold high-quality professional conversations which identify pupils who may be starting to fall behind. As a result, you ensure a rapid and robust response to intervene and make sure pupils receive focused and effective support and challenge. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils so they are well prepared for the next stages of their learning. You and your team know the pupils extremely well, which enables them to make consistently good progress. However, as discussed during the inspection, pupils do not always use and apply high-quality writing and mathematics skills across the curriculum. We also noted that pupils are capable of being moved more quickly into challenging work and alternative contexts for using and applying mathematics.

- My second line of enquiry focused on how effectively leaders are building capacity to ensure continued and sustained improvement. Since the previous inspection, there have been improving outcomes for children at the end of the early years foundation stage, as well as continued improvements in the pupils' results in the Year 1 phonics check. Furthermore, results in the key stage 2 spelling, punctuation and grammar tests have improved in 2016. This has contributed to improved writing by the time pupils leave the school. You have achieved this because you work closely as a team and hold robust and honest conversations about what needs to be improved. Leaders, including governors, know the school priorities well and your checks on teaching and learning are accurate and well informed. As a result, the school's and individuals' performance are under continual scrutiny, with effective action being taken to hold others to account. However, the role of special educational needs coordinator needs filling, and it is necessary to ensure that pending changes to your working arrangements are effective. Governors are aware that senior staffing positions need filling and that those stepping into them need full training with proper induction arrangements.
- My third key line of enquiry focused on how effectively you have been improving pupils' attendance, in particular for disadvantaged pupils as well as for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You have introduced a range of effective steps and actions to ensure that parents and carers are challenged about absence. You check attendance and involve other professional agencies, as required, to ensure pupils attend school. Furthermore, improvements to the curriculum and teaching mean that pupils are highly motivated and want to come to school. One pupil, whose view was typical told me, 'They (the teachers) support and comfort us and make lessons really fun!' Attendance is above the national average and is rapidly improving for both disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- My fourth line of enquiry focused on how well you and other leaders communicate with parents and carers to ensure that pupils are well supported to enjoy and achieve well in school. This focus was because the website appeared to be out of date. However, during the inspection, the overwhelming majority of parents voiced strong support for the school and did not raise concerns about communication. In fact, 97% of parents would recommend this school to others. You have responded well to previous parental surveys to ensure that you are meeting their needs fully. For example you, hold coffee mornings, have opened an account through social media, and have a 'catch-up' email service in place to ensure parents and carers can receive any information they need. Parents feel that staff are approachable and can be contacted on a daily basis. During the inspection, you checked and corrected missing or out-of-date information or policies on the school's website.
- My fifth line of enquiry focused on the impact of the school's safeguarding arrangements, which has been reported on elsewhere in this letter.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils use and apply their mathematical and writing skills effectively across the curriculum to achieve the highest standards that they are capable of
- teachers check pupils' understanding and move them on to more challenging work and alternative contexts in mathematics when they have mastered basic skills
- high-quality training and induction fully meet the needs of those in new or changing leadership roles.

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

Yours sincerely

Stewart Gale
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We agreed the timetable and inspection activities and I worked extensively with you across the whole day. I met with the senior teacher and other teachers during the afternoon. I scrutinised safeguarding records and discussed a wide range of matters related to safeguarding, including staff recruitment and vetting procedures and recent audits, and I reviewed evidence for reporting children missing education. Together, we visited lessons in the Reception Year, and key stages 1 and 2 to evaluate the effectiveness of provision. This involved scrutinising different workbooks and talking with a range of pupils in line with our agreed key lines of enquiry. I also met with two representatives of the governing body and reviewed school documents, including the school's self-evaluation summary and samples of reports of governors' visits. I talked with Year 2 pupils and listened to them read. I sought a range of views about safeguarding arrangements across the spectrum of inspection activities. I took full account of the 33 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the two responses made by pupils, as well as the further 33 free-texts received. Seven staff responses were considered as part of the inspection evidence.