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Mr John Jolliffe
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Dear Mr Jolliffe

Short inspection of Cheriton Fitzpaine Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 June 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 May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

In September 2015 Cheriton Fitzpaine Primary School was identified as requiring external support from the local authority because of a decline in published assessment information. Since January 2016, you have been in post as executive headteacher along with a head of school and a single governing body for the federation.

You and your leadership team have embraced the support from the local authority and, as a result, leadership in the school is strong. Together with improved governance, you have developed and secured an effective team of teachers and support staff. They work closely alongside one another across the federation to develop their practice and improve the quality of their teaching and pupils' learning. As a result, outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are improving.

Pupils' attitudes to all aspects of their learning are positive. The recently introduced developments in the curriculum have encouraged a thirst for learning among pupils and makes a strong contribution to their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. They enjoy learning through topics such as 'the 1066 Battle of Hastings', 'child war', 'beach combers' and 'rock pools'. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to develop their writing across the curriculum. Pupils appreciate the way teachers and teaching assistants give feedback on their work

and those who spoke to me said it helps them to make better progress. One pupil remarked, 'I enjoy learning at school because I always feel like I'm improving.'

At the previous inspection, you were asked to provide opportunities to develop pupils' computing skills. This led to the introduction of a new computing curriculum and investment in new technology. Pupils now have greater opportunities to programme and make animations in computing lessons. Pupils who met with me spoke enthusiastically about how they now regularly use portable devices in lessons. For example, a key stage 2 pupil said, 'Adults allow us to use ICT in maths and writing. We make pie charts using ICT in maths.'

Outcomes for pupils have improved as a result of your effective leadership. Leaders, including governors, are ambitious for pupils and promote improvement successfully. They use assessment information accurately to identify the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors are knowledgeable about the work of the school. They hold senior leaders to account rigorously for all aspects of the school's performance, including the use of funding to support disadvantaged pupils and the sport premium. They receive timely reports from senior leaders that evaluate the school's performance and provide insightful questions to challenge the effectiveness of school improvements. However, governors do not use the information you give them to analyse the performance of different groups of pupils with sufficient rigour.

A range of improvements have been secured since the last inspection. A new system for teacher appraisal and opportunities for teachers to plan learning and moderate pupils' work across the federation have been successful in maintaining good teaching. This is reflected in pupils' improved outcomes. Middle leaders use the school's assessment information very well to target pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, to make sure they make the progress they are capable of. This is having a positive impact on diminishing the difference in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. However, middle leaders do not use this information well enough to gain a comprehensive understanding of how different groups of pupils, such as boys and girls, are performing.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have made sure that protecting pupils from harm is a high priority for all staff and governors. You provide regular training for staff and governors in all aspects of safeguarding, such as child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, female genital mutilation and child protection. As a result, staff are confident in the school's procedures for identifying pupils who may be at risk. You work collaboratively with external agencies and challenge them if you feel more could be done to keep your pupils safe. Governors have a good grasp of their duty to safeguard children and receive regular reports from the school's leaders. All staff, governors and volunteers who work in the school are subject to rigorous safeguarding and vetting checks to ensure they are suitable to work with children. Records are detailed and thorough. Checks are also made on providers of extra-curricular activities. Procedures for

recording and storing personal information have recently been adopted. However, they are not yet fully embedded within the school.

Pupils' understanding of how to keep safe, including how to stay safe online, is developed through lessons, assemblies and visitors to school. For example, pupils have worked with the local police and fire service to learn about how to stay safe in the local community. Pupils told me that they feel safe in school and that any bullying issues are quickly and effectively resolved. One pupil explained, 'adults in school listen to us and help us to sort out our problems'. The vast majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, agreed that their children feel safe in the school.

Inspection findings

- We agreed that my first line of enquiry would be to check how leaders are ensuring that pupils in key stage 2 make the progress they are capable of in reading, writing and mathematics. The 2016 published Year 6 assessment results highlighted that attainment was either in line with or above national figures, while the progress of particular groups of pupils was below national figures. You demonstrated an in-depth understanding of how small cohort sizes have a significant impact on published information outcomes.
- As set out in the comprehensive federation development plan, consistent frameworks for teaching reading, writing and mathematics have been implemented to ensure that teaching is highly effective across key stage 2. Teachers use high-order questioning and regular assessment opportunities at the start of a unit of work to accurately match teaching to pupils' needs. As a result, almost all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making strong progress from their starting points. However, these strategies have had less of an impact for the most able pupils. This group of pupils is not challenged well enough to make the progress they are capable of.
- My second line of enquiry was about the impact of senior leaders' actions to improve outcomes for key stage 1 boys in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's published assessment information in 2016 showed that while the percentage of girls attaining the expected standard or above was higher than national figures, the percentage of boys attaining the expected standard or above was lower than national figures.
- You and your head of school have provided opportunities for staff to work collaboratively and plan highly effective teaching sequences with staff from across the federation. Cheriton Fitzpaine staff meet regularly with other staff in the federation to moderate pupils' work and gain a deeper understanding of curriculum standards. The head of school monitors teaching and learning as part of the school's performance management process and supports staff to improve their practice. Work in pupils' books demonstrates that these actions are having a positive impact so that boys in key stage 1, including the most able, are making the progress they are capable of in reading, writing and mathematics. However, some less able pupils are given so much support that their opportunities to learn

for themselves are limited. As a result, this group of pupils do not make strong enough progress.

- My third line of enquiry focused on how well leaders ensure that children in the early years perform as well as they can. In 2016, the percentage of girls and boys who achieved the expected standard in writing was below national percentages. Also, the percentage of girls achieving the expected standard in reading was below national expectations.
- Staff in the early years have recently received an intensive programme of support from the local authority. Senior leaders have also ensured that early years staff across the federation have regular opportunities to moderate children's work to ensure the accuracy of teachers' assessments. Teachers have welcomed this support and used the moderation opportunities to skilfully identify gaps in children's learning and plan topics and activities that engage children and ensure they make accelerated progress.
- The early years leader and her support staff have introduced a range of strategies to improve boys' and girls' writing. Staff have intelligently used the most recent 'rock pool' theme to develop language for writing, story-telling, phonetic understanding and children's fine motor skills. I scrutinised a range of children's writing and it was evident that almost all groups of children make strong progress from their starting points. Teachers' assessments are accurate and the percentage of boys and girls who are on track to achieve the expected standard is in line with current national figures. However, the lack of focus on challenging the most able children means that very few are on track to exceed the early learning goals at the end of the Reception Year.
- When some girls in the early years read to me, they read confidently by blending sounds and matching letters and sounds with accuracy. All of the girls were able to make simple predictions about what might happen in the books they were reading. It was evident from this inspection activity that all groups of girls are making strong progress from their starting points.
- My final line of enquiry was to explore why the most recently published attendance information highlights that some groups of pupils have absence and persistent absence rates well above national figures. Senior leaders now regularly scrutinise the school's attendance information and effectively support families whose children's attendance is causing concern. New attendance policies and procedures have been put in place across the federation to help all stakeholders understand the strategies to use to support vulnerable pupils. Consequently, the attendance of pupils with previously high rates of absence and persistent absence has risen rapidly to be in line with or above national figures.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers consistently provide the highest levels of challenge to the most able pupils to enable them to make stronger progress
- provision for less able pupils is monitored closely and their achievements

evaluated so that they make rates of progress that bring them in line with other pupils nationally

- work continues to build on the effective practice in the early years to further raise children's attainment and increase their rates of progress, especially for the most able children.

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

Yours sincerely

Craig Hayes
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, your head of school and other middle leaders. We discussed the improvements which have been made since the last inspection. Together, we visited lessons and carried out a learning walk. We looked at a sample of books from across the school. I also held discussions with four governors, including the chair of the governing body, and talked with pupils. I held a telephone conversation with an officer from the local authority. A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and information relating to the outcomes for current pupils. I also checked the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements and attendance information. I listened to eight pupils read. I took into account the 28 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and considered additional comments received from parents.