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10 July 2017

Mr David Woolley
Headteacher
Upham Church of England Aided Primary School
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Dear Mr Woolley

Short inspection of Upham Church of England Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 April 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your dedicated staff focus consistently on ensuring that pupils are well cared for and achieve of their best. As one parent commented, 'The school motivates all children and takes account of their individual needs. Staff are strongly committed to the pupils.' Pupils, parents and governors are proud to be part of your school community, and value the nurturing and aspirational ethos you have established. Pupils attend school regularly and are happy and achieve well because they experience high-quality teaching and support.

You have acted effectively to address the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. This is despite having to manage the challenge of a number of staff changes, including within the leadership team, in this small school. The early years outdoor area has been redeveloped, proving rich opportunities for children to use this space as a seamless part of their learning. Children play well together, showing independence and perseverance as they tackle tasks designed to develop their physical and social skills alongside their academic learning. As a result, children in the early years foundation stage achieve well and are prepared successfully for key stage 1.

Across key stages 1 and 2, pupils receive regular and helpful feedback about their work, in line with the school policy. Pupils use this verbal and written guidance routinely within lessons to revisit their learning and think carefully about how to

improve it. This supports pupils in making increasingly rapid progress across their subjects.

You recognise that pupils did not achieve as well as they should have in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 in 2016. Staff and governors know that raising standards across the school is their absolute priority. New subject leaders have taken effective action to adapt how mathematics and reading are taught, with a focus on deepening understanding through reasoning and questioning. You know that this work is in the early stages, but there is evidence that it is already helping pupils to make better progress by the end of key stage 2 than they have in the past.

Safeguarding is effective.

The focus on keeping pupils safe is unquestionable across your school. Regular and high-quality training ensures that staff and governors understand their safeguarding duties. Clear policies and systems are in place and are readily accessible to anyone who might need them. You go above and beyond what is required by law, in order to strengthen aspects of safeguarding which you describe as 'not feeling tight enough'. You and governors review safeguarding arrangements regularly, with the support of the local authority, to ensure they remain current and of high quality. You make careful checks on adults who come into school, and keep comprehensive records.

Staff know individual pupils and families very well, and understand their different needs. As a result, pupils attend school regularly, and feel very safe and well looked after. You keep a watching brief on pupils who may need extra support because of their circumstances, and take prompt and helpful action when needed. You keep high-quality and detailed records which are shared appropriately with staff, so that everyone can work effectively together to support pupils with potentially vulnerable circumstances. A buddy system helps younger pupils to settle quickly into the school when they arrive in the Reception Year. Older pupils thrive on the wealth of opportunities to support and build friendships with the younger children. Pupils trust adults and peer mentors to help them resolve any worries that they might have. Pupils typically behave very well, and the vast majority of parents say that any issues they raise are dealt with promptly and effectively.

Inspection findings

- As well as checking progress against the areas for improvement from the last inspection and the quality of safeguarding, we looked at how well pupils currently in the school are achieving. This was to see whether pupils are on track to make better progress by the end of key stage 2 than they did in the past. We reviewed how teachers are tackling pupils' historic underperformance, particularly in mathematics, by the end of key stage 2. We considered how effectively the curriculum supports girls and boys to achieve equally well throughout their time at the school.
- Last September, you established English and mathematics leadership roles in the

school to help you in your work to raise standards, particularly in reading and mathematics. Your English and mathematics leaders use local authority training and support effectively, reviewing how their subjects are taught across the school and identifying next steps for development. They are integral to the evident improvements in these areas, through their training of staff and modelling of good practice. As their coaching work and leadership skills develop, their focus is on embedding and refining their initial work, so that it sustains high levels of achievement for pupils in all year groups over time.

- Improving standards in mathematics has been a clear focus for all staff this year. The mathematics leader has adapted the school's approach to teaching mathematics so that pupils focus more regularly on using their reasoning skills to solve problems. Teachers use this method consistently to deepen pupils' understanding of their learning in mathematics. They use resources effectively to support pupils in gaining confidence, resilience and independence as they apply their knowledge to increasingly abstract contexts. As a result, pupils' learning in mathematics is more secure than it was by the end of Year 6 in 2016.
- Although outcomes and progress in mathematics are improving across the school, teachers do not consistently match learning to pupils' prior levels of achievement. Activities in lessons provide opportunities for pupils to be challenged increasingly over time, but not always from a high enough starting point. Consequently, although pupils typically make good progress and achieve well, some, particularly the most able, do not currently achieve the very high standards of which they are capable.
- Pupils currently in the school are making good progress and achieving well in reading, writing and mathematics. Across all of key stages 1 and 2, almost all pupils are working at levels that are at least appropriate for their age. An increasing proportion of pupils are making more rapid progress and achieving a greater depth of learning than was the case in the past. Teachers use your carefully considered assessment system effectively to identify which specific aspects of learning each individual pupil has not yet grasped. This enables extra help to be provided quickly so that individual pupils catch up and achieve well.
- By the end of the Reception Year, a greater percentage of pupils achieve the early learning goals than is seen nationally. This typically leads to above-average achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stages 1 and 2. However, boys and girls do not always achieve similarly well across their subjects. In 2016, for example, girls consistently outperformed boys in the early years, but boys made more rapid progress in writing and mathematics during key stage 1 and outperformed girls in mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- In key stages 1 and 2, pupils are taught in mixed-year classes, because of the small number in each year group. As such, the dynamics of each class change as pupils move up through the year groups and are combined in different ways. Teachers adapt the comprehensive curriculum successfully to meet the varying learning needs and interests of the pupils currently in their class. As a result, boys and girls engage well with their learning. They are currently making similarly strong progress and achieving comparatively well across the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recent changes to how reading and mathematics are taught lead to sustained improvements in pupils' outcomes and progress over time
- teachers refine how they use the school's new approach to teaching mathematics, so that it challenges pupils consistently to make strong rates of progress from their different starting points.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Portsmouth (CofE), the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Moles
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Together, we visited all classes to look at learning and talk to pupils about their work. I attended a whole-school assembly. I looked at a sample of English, mathematics and wider work from across the curriculum in key stages 1 and 2. I met with you, your English and mathematics leaders, and groups of staff, pupils and governors. I spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone, and to parents at the school gate at the start of the day. I reviewed safeguarding practice and documents, including recruitment checks on staff. I considered a wide range of information provided by the school and on the website, including attendance and behaviour records, pupil performance information and curriculum overview documents.