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Miss Julie Ingram
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Ingram

Short inspection of Chappel Church of England Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

Pupils are confident, articulate and their individual needs are well met at your school. Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about their experiences. They say that teachers make them work hard but also make learning really exciting and enjoyable. They feel that their teachers help them to achieve well. Almost all parents are highly effusive in their praise for the school. The atmosphere around the school is one of celebration of pupils' high-quality work and their community ethos. Consequently, Chappel is a harmonious and happy learning environment.

You, other leaders and governors have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school's provision, most particularly the challenges of having small numbers of pupils with sometimes very varied needs. You have used this understanding to continue to raise standards in the school. In particular, you have invested time and resources into developing a rich curriculum, including extra-curricular provision that is thoroughly planned and engages pupils with a range of subjects in a creative way. As a result, pupils love to learn, and make good progress in the time that they are in the school.

While you have continued to improve the school since the previous inspection, you are clear that there are still areas that need further development in the school's

provision. In particular, ensuring that pupils make rapid progress in the early parts of key stage 2, most notably in mathematics, and that leaders monitor more precisely the longer-term impact of their work on pupils with specific and complex needs.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, as the designated safeguarding leader, alongside your senior teacher, ensure that staff record all incidents or concerns, no matter how seemingly trivial. Although you have made only a few referrals to external agencies, these referrals are appropriately made.

You ensure that attendance and safeguarding go hand in hand in your work. The small numbers of pupils at your school mean that your published attendance figures against national averages for some groups of pupils can be affected considerably by a few pupils. Your continuous and diligent work with families and the local authority ensures that you make a difference to pupils' attendance and safety, most notably for vulnerable pupils.

Pupils feel safe and are taught how to stay safe, online and in the wider community, through a wide variety of lessons, trips, assemblies and visiting speakers. Pupils say that behaviour is exemplary and that bullying 'doesn't happen here'. The curriculum ensures that pupils are taught to respect each other's differences as something to be cherished. Pupils actively live out the school's Christian values in school, and in the wider community.

Inspection findings

- Your school is much smaller than other primary schools nationally, with each year group holding between 10 to 15 pupils, depending on the year. The ability of pupils on entry, and their needs, can vary widely, as indicated by your own monitoring information and by inspection evidence. You have a number of pupils who join or leave you mid-way through the year. Some parents in particular join the school from other schools because they feel that the individual care for their child's specific needs can be met more precisely by your school.
- My first line of enquiry was to review the provision in the early years. This was because, despite seeming strengths in the other areas of the school, the performance of the early years had dipped in 2015 and 2016, although it remained in line with the national average.
- You have worked hard to raise standards in the early years. Your early years leader has worked extensively with other leaders and external support to ensure that pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills in particular have been much more securely developed. Consequently, outcomes for the Reception class this year are back up to the high standards of 2014, and are higher than the national average for last year.
- My second line of enquiry was to review how your team supported the individual needs of pupils to make good progress, including the very small numbers of vulnerable pupils, across the curriculum.

- Published data does not give a consistently clear picture of these pupils' progress over time, owing to the small numbers of pupils in each year group and the significant minority who enter or leave the school mid-way through the year. The ability of pupils on entry can also vary considerably between year groups. We spent a lot of time tracking individual pupils throughout the day to look at their progress in the school over time, and the support provided by the school.
- Pupils make good progress in the school because you identify them as individuals and support them accordingly. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, have very bespoke support, tailored to their needs. Teachers use pupils' prior assessment information and the school's 'assertive mentoring' sessions, to plan effective work and support for pupils. Parents and pupils are particularly appreciative about the communication between school and home, and the help that pupils receive.
- Leaders and governors have an insightful understanding of their ability to meet pupils' needs across a year, through their scrutiny of pupils' progress and the use of the additional funding that the school receives. On occasion, though, you acknowledge that leaders do not review the longer-term effect of the school's intervention and additional support work for a few pupils who have more complex special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- You have focused on raising standards in science in key stage 2 following the 2016 key stage 2 outcomes. A full audit, staff training and significant development of the curriculum mean that science has improved considerably this year. Many pupils of differing abilities commented that they 'loved' science and the numerous opportunities that they received, including practical activities in which to apply their learning.
- My third line of enquiry was about the capacity in the leadership in the school to bring about sustained improvements since the previous inspection. For two terms this year you have acted as interim executive headteacher at another local primary school. This arrangement has now come to an end, as the school has recruited a permanent headteacher.
- You and your governors identified that this limited the school's capacity for a short period to develop all areas identified in your school development plan. In particular, your work to support some of the less able pupils in Year 1, who required additional support to catch up in their reading, was not as rapid as you would have liked.
- There are some very specific reasons for some pupils not meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check that cannot be fully explained without identifying individual pupils. Notwithstanding this, you do acknowledge that leaders and staff underestimated how much support some pupils would need, particularly where they had not made enough progress in their Reception Year in 2016.
- Since your return, you have acted quickly to support these pupils so that they are now having focused intervention to bring them closer to age-related expectations in reading. You are also applying for further support for some pupils through external agencies, where appropriate.
- My fourth line of enquiry was to review how you have improved the school since

the previous inspection, most notably subject leadership. You have worked hard to develop subject leadership. Subject leaders use your assessment system accurately to identify and support pupils who require additional support. This has supported the good progress and attainment of pupils since the previous inspection and most notably in key stages 1 and 2 in 2016.

- However, you have identified that pupils are not making consistently rapid progress in mathematics in the earlier stages of key stage 2. Consequently, while your work to support Year 6 is making sure that some lower-attaining pupils are making good progress, you identify that not all pupils are consistently attaining the highest standards that they can, most notably in mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they further support current Year 1 pupils who need to catch up, so that they can be closer to age-related expectations in their reading and phonics by the end of Year 2
- they more precisely review the impact of intervention on individual pupils over the longer term, most notably for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who need to catch up
- they continue to monitor that pupils make even quicker progress in the earlier stages of key stage 2, most notably in mathematics, to ensure that they attain the highest standards by the end of Year 6.

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

Yours sincerely

Kim Pigram
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with you, leaders and some of your staff. I met with representatives from the governing body, and from the local authority. I visited classrooms with you, where I spoke to pupils, and heard them read. I also reviewed pupils' work, and undertook a work scrutiny of pupils' books and assessment files. I spoke to pupils and parents. I took account of the Ofsted's online questionnaire from 38 parents. You had technical issues sending out the staff survey but I did speak to some staff throughout the day. We reviewed a range of school documentation, including information relating to school development planning, self-evaluation, the spending of additional funding related to pupil premium, special educational needs, safeguarding and pupils' progress.