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Mrs Ruth Matthews
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Matthews

Short inspection of Shalbourne CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 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 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 staff team work effectively together to ensure pupils' learning and emotional needs are met in this small and inclusive school. You have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that require further work. You are working on the right aspects for improvement. For example, leaders' recent actions have brought about improvements to pupils' outcomes in writing.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to ensure that pupils were better able to improve their work. Your work in this regard is mostly effective. Teaching builds on what pupils already know, understand and can do. Pupils respond well to teachers' assessment and make adjustments routinely to their work. This is particularly effective in writing. Pupils have a good stamina for writing. They present their work well and use precise language to add detail and impact in their writing. On occasion, the writing of the middle-attaining and the most able pupils does not give sufficient detail or extension. This hinders pupils' progress.

Pupils benefit from a varied curriculum and are encouraged to apply their mathematical and writing skills well. For example, in Years 5 and 6, pupils can use and apply their mathematical skills to plot a cross section of a river. They apply their writing skills to explain their understanding of geographical skills well.

The views of parents are generally positive. Almost every parent who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, stated that their children are taught well. A

small minority of parents raised concern about pupils' behaviour and how quickly leaders respond to their concerns when they arise. You, along with governors, acknowledge that there is more to do to secure parental satisfaction. The vast majority of pupils demonstrate resilience in their learning and present consistently good attitudes to learning. School records and inspection evidence indicate that the school is managing the challenging behaviour presented by a very small number of pupils effectively.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that safeguarding requirements are fit for purpose. Statutory safeguarding duties are met. All staff training is up to date and in line with current legislation. Governors undertake regular checks of the school site to ensure health and safety requirements are met successfully. Staff vetting checks are carried out rigorously to ensure staff suitability to work with children. However, some record keeping needs to be strengthened.

Staff routinely apply their understanding of their training. They refer any concerns promptly to designated safeguarding leaders. You work closely with external agencies to ensure that you are doing all that you can to support the most vulnerable pupils and minimise their risk of harm.

Pupils who present challenging behaviour are managed well. Risk assessments and procedures in place to support these pupils are robust; external agency support is used well. As a result, exclusions are reducing after an increase in recent months.

Pupils spoken to on inspection said that they feel safe at school. Pupils say adults help them resolve any issues quickly and they are confident to talk to any adult if they have concerns. Pupils understand how to stay safe online. Supervision at playtime and lunchtime is good. Pupils enjoy the wide variety of activities on offer at playtimes to suit their individual needs. This helps pupils develop their personal and emotional needs well in a supportive, nurturing and inclusive environment.

Inspection findings

In order to ascertain that the school remains good, a key line of enquiry was to establish the effectiveness of the teaching of writing across key stages 1 and 2. This is because published pupils' performance information indicated that a small number of middle-attaining pupils did not meet expected standards in 2016.

- Leaders, including governors, acted swiftly to put plans in place to develop the relative weaknesses in writing identified last year. You, ably supported by the English leader, have driven up standards in writing. Additional staff training and regular moderation of work have strengthened the robustness of teachers' assessment and their subject knowledge. Teachers' understanding of the skills that pupils must apply to write at the highest standard has improved. The greatest impact can be seen in Years 5 and 6. As such, pupils in key stage 2 are able to apply their understanding of sentence structure and punctuation with greater success and impact. Occasionally, greater expansion of their ideas would strengthen pupils' writing even further.

- In key stage 1, pupils make good progress overall. Pupils' stamina for writing and fluency of handwriting is usually good. Most pupils apply their understanding of phonics to their writing well. However, a small number of pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not accurately spell key words. As a result, this hinders the progress these pupils make.

Another aspect that I looked at focused on leaders' actions to ensure that pupils who are eligible for additional funding, through the pupil premium or for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress.

- Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and reported to governors. Regular meetings with teachers ensure that staff are held to account for pupils' progress. Leaders monitor the attendance of disadvantaged pupils carefully. Consequently, their attendance is in line with the national average. As a result of effective teaching, the vast majority of disadvantaged pupils make good or rapid progress in reading. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in mathematics and writing overall. However, you accurately identify that a small group of pupils in Year 1 could be doing even better.
- Current pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from appropriate and timely support. Close identification of pupils' needs ensures that planned learning builds on what pupils can do, know and understand. The school works alongside external agencies to ensure that pupils get the support and teaching they need. Pupils are making good progress this year. This is particularly the case in reading, where many pupils make rapid progress. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are catching up with the standards that are expected for their age in reading, and mathematics. You identify that there is more to do to enable these pupils to catch up in writing.
- Governors check pupils' progress for groups of pupils eligible for additional funding through their meetings with school leaders and through school visits. However, they have not ensured that information on the school's website about the pupil premium is compliant with Department for Education guidance.

I also looked at the impact of leaders' checks on teaching and learning on holding teachers to account for maintaining high levels of pupils' achievement.

- As headteacher, you hold teachers to account through regular meetings to review pupils' performance. Middle leaders are developing their roles and responsibilities well. They understand their role in raising pupils' achievement across the school. You undertake regular checks on pupils' learning, including book scrutiny. However, checks of work in books do not take into account pupils' prior attainment. As a result, the progress in writing of a few middle-attaining pupils, and a few of the most able pupils, is not as strong as it could be.
- Governors use the detailed information they have to challenge leaders effectively. However, as identified in the school's own parent questionnaire this term, governors recognise that there is more to do to keep parents well informed of the impact of their work.

My final line of enquiry focused on how well pupils use their reading skills to develop their understanding of texts.

- Pupils persevere with their reading. They use a variety of strategies, including phonics, to read unknown words well. The pupils I talked to were very positive about the teaching of reading they receive. Current school performance information indicates that standards in reading have improved this year. Pupils use their comprehension skills proficiently in upper key stage 2. However, you acknowledge that there is still more to do to ensure middle-attaining pupils across the school apply their comprehension skills with the sophistication required to exceed the standards expected for their age in reading.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders' checks on learning take into account pupils' prior attainment so that more middle-attaining and the most able pupils make rapid progress and exceed standards expected for their age in writing, particularly in key stage 1
- pupils demonstrate a consistently good understanding of the texts they read so that more middle-attaining pupils exceed the standards that are expected for their age.
- any parental concerns are resolved quickly and regular checks on parental satisfaction are made by governors.

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 Wiltshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Julie Carrington

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke with you, senior and middle leaders, and a group of three governors. I also met with a representative of the local authority. I made visits to lessons to observe pupils' attitudes to learning and to scrutinise their work. I looked at pupils' workbooks with a variety of leaders. I talked with a group of pupils to gather their views of the school and listened to them read.

I considered a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's self-evaluation, development plans, school performance information, attendance,

behaviour and safeguarding documentation.

In addition, I took account of 22 responses to the Parent View online survey, free-text messaging service and talked to parents during the inspection. I gathered the views of staff and pupils through discussions during the inspection and took account of their responses to the online survey.