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Mrs Caroline Norris
Headteacher
The Colleton Primary School
Colleton Drive
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Dear Mrs Norris

Short inspection of The Colleton Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 18 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 July 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 have led your staff successfully through the challenges of an expanding school and building programme, retaining the unique features and culture that are important to the members of your school community. Staff are proud and happy to work at The Colleton. They aspire to provide pupils with every opportunity to succeed and prepare for the future. As one member of staff told me, 'We are a community that pulls together for the best outcomes for the children, emotionally and academically.' This was certainly evident throughout my day in your school, and from feedback from the vast majority of parents and pupils.

Governors bring a wealth of experience to their roles, supporting and challenging you and other leaders to account for the difference you make to the pupils in the school. Leaders understand the school's many strengths and have acted effectively to secure ongoing improvement since the last inspection. An open learning culture supports staff in reviewing and developing their practice, so that teaching remains securely effective across this growing school. Where pupils' achievement in phonics across key stage 1 last year was not as good as it should have been, you took prompt and effective action that secured improvement this year by reviewing and adapting how phonics is taught.

Pupils are rightly proud of their school. They relish the flexible learning opportunities that help them to develop their independence and study skills, within

their mixed-age learning groups. Consequently, they feel well-prepared for their next steps in learning. Pupils behave respectfully towards each other and the adults they work with. They describe their teachers as 'helpful, kind and fair'. They feel safe and cared for, and trust staff to listen to them if they talk to them about any worries they may have. As one pupil described to me, 'Our school is very different but we benefit from that. We are one massive family.'

As leaders, you and your senior team identify accurately how well the school is performing and what could make it even better. You recognise that, while pupils typically achieve very well during their time at the school, their progress in mathematics is not as rapid as it is in reading and writing. In particular, pupils who have lower starting points or require additional support, such as the disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress but do not catch up quickly and achieve as well as other pupils nationally. Vulnerable pupils are supported well, but their attendance remains below the very good attendance of others in the school. Your work to develop these aspects of the school has already begun.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils' welfare is undoubtedly priority number one at this school. All staff put pupils at the centre of their work. You and governors review policies and procedures regularly to ensure that they are fit for purpose and support a culture that keeps pupils safe. Challenges, such as access to the on-site children's centre and nursery, and transferring pupils safely to the off-site after-school club, are managed carefully and successfully.

Staff are trained appropriately to understand and carry out their safeguarding duties. They know pupils well and use the school's effective systems to report and address any concerns they may have about a pupil's welfare. Records of concerns and actions taken are suitably detailed and fit for purpose. Leaders carry out appropriate recruitment checks on staff as a matter of routine. While records of these checks meet requirements, leaders and governors recognise that systems for reviewing these records regularly are not as well-developed as they could be.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we considered together: how well vulnerable pupils are supported in attending regularly and making rapid progress; whether consistently effective teaching is leading to strong progress across key stage 2 and improved outcomes in phonics; and how well different groups of pupils in the early years foundation stage are prepared for key stage 1.
- Leaders have focused on raising the profile of vulnerable pupils across the school. Staff know who these pupils are and what their specific needs are. Leaders prioritise ensuring that all pupils, including the disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive high-quality teaching that supports their progress. As a result, many of the vulnerable pupils in the school are making as good progress as other pupils in school. However, they are

not consistently making the accelerated progress that will enable them to catch up with their peers in school or achieve as well as other pupils nationally.

- Pupils' attendance at school is typically very good. Overall, absence is well below national figures. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not attend as regularly as other pupils at the school. Leaders understand the complex reasons behind individual pupils' low attendance. They work effectively to support families so that barriers to good attendance are removed. Leaders recognise that this work remains a priority, so that vulnerable pupils' attendance improves further and becomes as good as for others in the school.
- Leaders identified that pupils' phonics knowledge by the end of Year 1 in 2016 was not as secure as it should have been. They reviewed and adapted how phonics is taught, so that pupils have richer and more frequent opportunities to develop their skills. As a result, pupils' phonics knowledge has improved notably, as seen by the increase in the percentage of Year 1 pupils who met the phonics screening check standard in 2017.
- Pupils typically achieve well at this school. Those who have high prior attainment make very good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of key stage 2. In comparison, those with lower starting points make less rapid progress, and so are not catching up quickly with their peers in school. Sometimes, pupils' progress slows as they move from one learning team to another. Pupils do not typically achieve as well in mathematics as they do in reading and writing, which have been the focus of leaders' most recent work.
- Leaders have begun working on improving outcomes and progress in mathematics. They recognise middle-prior-attaining pupils as a key group who need to make more rapid progress. Initial work this year has focused on identifying strengths and areas for development in the teaching of mathematics, and investing in useful resources to help pupils with their work. Leaders know that their next steps for the year ahead are to ensure the sharing of successful practice across the school. This is likely to lead to consistently effective opportunities for all pupils to make good progress and achieve at the highest levels by the end of key stage 2.
- The early years team work well together to provide a consistently effective approach to learning. Children are independent and articulate, speaking confidently to me when I visited the foundation stage area. Staff engage well with children to support their learning, and plan successfully to meet their different developmental needs. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make particularly rapid progress during the Reception Year. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress in mathematics. Their reading and writing skills are less well developed.
- Leaders recognise that boys have not historically been as well prepared as girls for key stage 1. In 2016, the proportion of boys in Reception Year who achieved a good level of development was below national figures, whereas girls achieved much better than other girls nationally. Early years staff have worked to provide appropriate opportunities to develop boys' wider skills, such as moving and

handling, so that boys are better equipped for other aspects of future learning. As a result, an equal proportion of boys and girls have achieved a good level of development in 2017, showing the achievement gap has closed.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress in mathematics accelerates, so that pupils achieve consistently as well as they can by the end of key stage 2, regardless of their starting points
- the attendance of some disadvantaged pupils, and of some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, improves further, so that all pupils come to school as regularly as they should.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Moles
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and your deputy headteacher to discuss a range of issues, including the school's self-evaluation, safeguarding arrangements and current pupils' performance information. Together, we visited a number of classrooms to look at learning, and reviewed a sample of work in pupils' books. I met with the special educational needs coordinator, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils, staff and governors. I spoke informally to parents on the playground at the start of the day and considered 146 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire. I also took into account 168 pupil questionnaire responses and 32 staff survey responses. As part of scrutinising safeguarding arrangements, I reviewed the school's central record of recruitment checks and a number of relevant policies available on the school's website.