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Mrs Sam Churchill  
Hilmarton Primary School  
Compton Road  
Hilmarton  
Calne  
Wiltshire  
SN11 8SG

Dear Mrs Churchill

### **Short inspection of Hilmarton Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 September 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 ensured that the school motto, 'Explore, Enjoy, Learn', continues to be the theme for all work at the school. The intake of pupils has changed significantly in the recent past. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make up a third of the population. A tenth of pupils have education, health and care plans. There has also been an influx of children from local service families. The unremitting work of the special educational needs coordinator and the service families support worker help these pupils to succeed. Staff, through your guidance, meet the requirements of each pupil. As a result, outcomes have improved since 2016. There is a strong team spirit and inclusive ethos among the entire school population. This enhances the learning of all.

The school is a thriving aspect of the local community. You work tirelessly to engage with parents in the ever-widening locality. This has proved beneficial. Volunteers from local villages support the school. You are inventive in the use of the school buildings which are both historic and disparate. The internal space provides pupils with a small but vibrant setting for learning. You use both local and school grounds outside for physical pursuits.

Stringent evaluation of teaching, learning and outcomes is undertaken by you and by governors. You are keen to challenge yourselves. There is continual

improvement for the diverse pupil population. Plans are comprehensive but do not reflect enough on the impact of key actions. A tighter focus with clear expectations is not yet evident in all the planning. You know that when planning was more specific, such as the work on phonics, it created greater success. You intend to improve this area of strategic work.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school's policies to ensure that pupils are well protected are in place. All staff, including governors, undertake training in child protection. You test the understanding of staff on a regular basis. The checks undertaken on staff, visitors and recruitment are stringent. A wide range of outside agencies support vulnerable pupils well. Staff know how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, and the influence of radical or extreme views. You have provided security locks on the many buildings in the school grounds. This protects pupils once the school day begins. You are undertaking a risk assessment on the security of the older pupils' arrival. This will increase their safety further. This measure is indicative of the school's sound practice.

### **Inspection findings**

- We investigated the progress of pupils in writing. There has been an extensive evaluation of the teaching of phonics. The leading teacher has initiated a range of new practices. These cater for the differences in the learning of the pupils. The success of this work shows in the improved outcomes for phonics in 2017.
- The lead for English has provided a timetable for staff to introduce new grammar, punctuation and spelling. This makes sure that changes are progressive and incremental throughout the year. Pupils apply the skills learned meaningfully to extended writing tasks. The work provides a full range of writing experiences and prepares pupils for the end-of-year tests at key stage 2. Teachers are providing regular guidance on how pupils can make better progress in their English work. This guidance is lacking in foundation subjects.
- Staff changes stalled pupils' progress in key stage 2 for some time in 2017. You have introduced greater challenge in pupils' work. At key stage 1, you have focused on the necessity for pupils to understand number bonding and times tables. Teachers have a secure understanding of age-related expectations. Their confidence in the curriculum is encouraging them to be more inventive. They are teaching mathematics in exciting ways. Pupils engage well with the subject so mathematical skills are improving. Teachers plan diligently for the wide range of abilities in the mixed-age classes. Pupils are making good progress. The mastery of more complex problem-solving and reasoning in mathematics needs further work.
- We looked at the development of children in the early years phase. You have remodelled the outside area. Now, there are good and stimulating activities in which children can engage. Pupils work on their numeracy skills and other

important early learning goals. There is equipment on which children can take risks safely. They experiment with their balance and agility. Inside, children write, count and improve their motor skills. Children are able to listen and attend from the start of their time in school.

- This inspection was undertaken at the start of the second week of the new academic year. The focus and attention of the children were impressive. They engaged in activities inside and out. They understand how to take turns and speak politely to each other and staff. The leader provided a training session for local nurseries and childminders. Consequently, children are school ready.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- school planning is focused on specific areas for improvement which will have the greatest impact on pupils' development
- pupils are made aware of how to progress further in foundation subjects as well as their literacy and numeracy skills
- pupils develop their mathematical skills in more complex reasoning and problem-solving.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, middle leaders and governors. I had a telephone conversation with the school improvement adviser. I spoke informally with pupils. I visited lessons for all classes in the school. I looked at the quality of work in pupils' exercise books and considered documentary evidence relating to the impact of the school's work, including safeguarding. I took into account 36 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 22 comments written by parents, plus the three responses from staff and the 17 pupil responses to Ofsted's online surveys.