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25 September 2017

Mr Ian Hickman
Headteacher
Appleshaw St Peter's CofE Primary School
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Dear Mr Hickman

Short inspection of Appleshaw St Peter's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 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 January 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 joined the school shortly after the last inspection. Since then, you and your able deputy headteacher have worked very well together to improve aspects of the school. Parents, staff and governors praise your forward thinking and integrity. As one parent told me, you are 'approachable, level headed, but no pushover'. Another said, 'He has the best interests of every child at heart.'

You have made sure that pupils are happy, safe and very well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils' behaviour is superb, reflecting the core values of love, fellowship and justice especially well. Pupils are caring towards each other, helping their friends with work in lessons and including those who might feel lonely at playtimes. They are very proud of the numerous opportunities they have to develop leadership skills and to be part of their community. One told me that she enjoyed being a 'civic leader' through helping to make the village more tidy and by volunteering for the washing up at home. Typical comments from pupils included, 'I just love it here', and 'I would definitely recommend this school to others.'

The school has responded well to the areas for improvement from the previous Ofsted report. You have worked hard to make improvements to the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. You have made sure that assessments are more accurate, so that leaders know what pupils can do and when they need extra help. Teachers use the information from assessments to plan learning which builds well on pupils' skills. Pupils understand what to do to develop

their work because teachers tell them precisely what to do to improve. Pupils feel well supported by the adults in school. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning and are taking more responsibility for their work. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 discussed their ideas about spelling rules with each other, using dictionaries to check the meanings of difficult words. Consequently, pupils make good progress, particularly in the early years and in key stage 1. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils achieve well. This includes those pupils who join the school part way through the key stage.

You have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for further development and your plans for the school's continuing improvement are focused appropriately. Governors are developing their skills commendably so that they are able to hold leaders to account more effectively than they have in the past. They are learning to ask challenging questions about the progress of groups of pupils such as those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and service children. They know that they also need to prioritise the progress of the most able pupils to check that these pupils are achieving as they should. You recognise that sometimes leaders and governors do not give themselves enough time to reflect on the impact of their actions when planning for the school's future development.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have made sure that there is a highly effective culture of safeguarding in the school. All parents I spoke to agreed that their children are looked after well in a caring environment. Leaders and governors have made sure that safer recruitment processes are followed effectively. Staff receive comprehensive training in child protection, so that they are alert to any possible safeguarding issues. Staff speak confidently about what to do should they have any concerns, and your meticulous records show that these are taken seriously. You liaise with the appropriate local agencies promptly and effectively to share information and get extra help for children who may need it.

The curriculum includes a strong focus on keeping children safe in their community. Pupils told me that their 'pedestrian training' helped them to understand how to walk around the village safely, including when they cross the roads and when they cycle. Pupils spoke knowledgeably about their awareness of stranger danger, and most especially they could tell me the dangers of social media.

Pupils have a good understanding of the difference between someone being unkind and someone being a bully. They told me that there is 'no bullying' in the school, but that if someone was unkind an adult would help them to sort it out. They particularly praised your emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA) as someone they could go to if they needed emotional support. All pupils that I spoke to, and those who responded to the online pupil survey, confirmed that they feel very safe in school. As one pupil in Year 3 told me, 'Everyone here is kind and caring and I have lots of friends.'

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, my focus areas were: how well the culture of the school promotes safeguarding; how effectively teachers make sure that children in the early years make good progress and maintain this into Year 1; how effectively teachers are teaching writing so that pupils make good progress; how well leaders make sure that boys make good progress; and how well the school supports pupils' individual needs.
- You have made sure that teaching and outcomes in the early years have improved considerably since the last inspection. Children have access to a broad range of activities which hold their interest both in the classroom and outside. When I visited, children were on their second morning since starting school. They were learning new routines and what was expected of them quickly. They were excited to learn new skills, such as when tessellating the building bricks in the construction area. The early years teacher provides numerous opportunities for children to mark-make and write in different contexts, for example through drawing shapes and forming letters outside. Children start the early years with average starting points. Adults make sure that they know what children can do from when they join the school because of timely conversations and visits with parents. Children consistently make strong progress to achieve above-average outcomes by the end of the year. This year, every child achieved a good level of development.
- Pupils in Year 1 build on the strong start they have had in the early years. Phonics is taught in an imaginative way which allows pupils to make very good progress. During my visit, pupils eagerly hunted for words hidden outdoors, deciding whether they should go in the treasure chest or the rubbish, depending on if they were real or made-up words. They practised speaking and writing the words, with the teacher providing timely extra help to those who needed it.
- Pupils' progress in writing has been too slow. You recognise this and consequently have made writing a key part of your improvement planning. Your team has analysed precisely which aspects of writing need to improve, identifying accurately that pupils need to get better at spelling. Your actions to improve spelling include making changes to how it is taught, as well as highlighting the importance of spelling accurately. Other aspects of pupils' writing are strong. Pupils' work shows that they write in depth and for different purposes across the whole curriculum. They structure sentences well and are increasing their use of interesting vocabulary.
- Previously published results show that boys do not make as much progress as girls. You have set about changing the culture in school so that boys' interest in their learning is maintained and their resilience improves. Parents told me that they value the attention you have devoted to this, especially the meetings you have held where you have shared your findings and provided tips about what they can do to help at home. During visits to lessons, I saw no discernible differences in the way that boys and girls were working or in the quality of work they produced. Boys spoke about being interested in learning. One told me that he particularly enjoyed the 'reading challenge' where he had to write about the books he read. He was pleased that this had improved both his reading and his

writing. As a result of your work, boys' progress has improved, but you acknowledge that there is more to do to make sure it matches that of girls.

- Adults at Appleshaw St Peter's keep a watchful eye on pupils' learning and welfare needs. Leaders track regularly the progress of all pupils, so that they know how well they are achieving. You carefully benchmark their starting points and moderate pupils' work with other schools so that you are sure that judgements are accurate. You use the information you collect to deliver timely and tailored extra help for pupils who need to make faster progress. Your skilful ELSA helps to meet pupils' welfare needs, including ensuring that service children are emotionally supported when their parents are absent on active duty. However, sometimes teaching does not stretch the most able pupils to achieve as well as they could. Parents and pupils praise adults' work. As one said, 'Staff treat each other with respect, the children with dignity and the school keeps parents well informed.' Another wrote, 'Our children are well looked after emotionally and educationally. We feel very lucky that our children attend Appleshaw St Peter's.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' spelling and vocabulary improve so that they make quicker progress in writing
- leaders give themselves time to reflect on the impact of their actions as part of their future development planning.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Old
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I observed learning with you across the school. I met with you and your deputy headteacher to discuss your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. We discussed pupils' progress and attainment, and examined pupils' work. I scrutinised a range of records and documentation relating to safer recruitment, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, minutes of meetings and staff appraisals. I explored your website and met with governors. I spoke to pupils informally in lessons and at playtime. I also

took account of the seven survey responses submitted by pupils and met with a group of pupils in key stage 2. I observed you giving feedback to a member of staff. I took account of the 11 survey responses submitted by staff and spoke to teachers about their understanding of safeguarding. I met with a group of parents before school and took account of the 35 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.