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Mrs Eliza Hollis
Executive Headteacher
Whittlebury Church of England Primary School
High Street
Towcester
Northamptonshire
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Dear Mrs Hollis

Short inspection of Whittlebury Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 November 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 Whittlebury Church of England Primary School was judged to be good on 1 May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As executive headteacher, you have shown no complacency regarding the school's many achievements recognised at the last inspection. Instead you have built on these areas to ensure that your pupils receive an excellent standard of education. There are many occasions when your pupils are achieving assessment results significantly higher than national comparators. Governors know the school's strengths and have plans to build on these and extend their influence to improve provision across and beyond the federation.

Your teachers all face the challenge of delivering lessons to pupils in classes containing mixed-age groups. They have worked hard to overcome this challenge and are very effectively providing daily support and challenge for every pupil to help them achieve their potential. Teachers' use of open-ended tasks, particularly in mathematics, that require pupils to use a 'trial and error' approach is effectively encouraging reasoning, investigating and communication skills.

Parents hold the school in very high regard and speak positively about how you and your staff treat children as individuals and celebrate their different characteristics and strengths. They are delighted when they receive a 'golden ticket' to attend the monthly 'VIP assembly' which celebrates a broad range of

their child's achievements. They told me they enjoy seeing their child walk down the red carpet under the disco lights and the sense of pride this gives their child. Your 'wow vouchers' also enable parents to share their children's achievements beyond school.

Your motto of 'small enough to care, large enough to inspire' can be seen in many aspects of the school. These include all the pupils knowing each other well and feeling the school is one family while having the opportunities to take part in large drama productions and sports teams.

Your pupils told me they value the way they are treated in school as staff encourage them to develop their personal interests and strengths. They also recognised that the school has helped them learn to value the ways in which they are all different. The pupils are proud to lead lunchtime clubs in areas of their own interests, which is fostering their sense of responsibility.

During the inspection, I saw high levels of engagement with all learning and excellent learning behaviour in all classes. As pupils move around school they are very polite and well-mannered.

The school takes part in a wide range of fundraising activities, some as part of national fundraising events and others on a more personal level for charities with links to families at the school.

You have developed many links with the local community with coffee mornings held for local pensioners and sewing and gardening clubs the community engage with.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school has a strong safeguarding culture. All staff spoken with know their role in keeping children safe as a result of regular training and updates including through the federation newsletter. Clear processes for recording, sharing and acting on concerns are in place. School records show that prompt action has been taken to provide support for families who need help. The school has a focus on early help and support and is proud of its relationships with families which makes this support effective.

The school holds detailed records collected during staff recruitment processes and all required checks on staff are completed. All staff are trained to the appropriate level for their role.

Pupils know they can share concerns with a trusted adult in school and that adults will help them deal with any issues they have. They are taught how to keep themselves safe in school and in the community.

Pupils confidently discuss their safeguarding lessons and state they feel they are being helped to stay safe now and in the future. They speak confidently about

how to keep themselves safe on the internet and how to advise their friends to be safe.

Parents stated they feel Whittlebury Primary is a safe and caring school where staff are committed to children's well-being.

Inspection findings

- School governors, including the recently appointed chair of governors, know the school well and speak knowledgeably about the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. Governors hold school leaders to account and seek first-hand evidence of the impact of school improvement plans and to validate predictions of pupils' achievements.
- Governors are currently developing a strategic plan across the federation to secure the long-term growth and stability of the schools.
- The executive headteacher has developed creative ways to deploy staff across the four-school federation to increase leadership capacity and expertise.
- Federation subject leaders meet regularly to observe the teaching in each school and to discuss standards. They have used this information to develop action plans which have resulted in high standards of teaching and pupils' achievements at Whittlebury School.
- Teaching is effective in all year groups. All teachers work hard to overcome the challenge of teaching mixed-age classes.
- Innovative ways have been developed to meet the individual learning needs of pupils and to ensure that challenge is provided.
- The executive headteacher is very forward thinking and is continually seeking to improve practice in the school and to develop staff.
- The school prides itself on its inclusivity and many parents select Whittlebury when they are seeking an alternative school for a child who has had issues elsewhere.
- Pupils state they feel they can be an 'individual' in the school and that everyone is accepted for who they are.
- Extremely high standards are achieved in end of key stage national assessments including in the Year 1 phonics check where 100% of pupils have achieved the expected standard for several years.
- Pupils' achievements are above national comparators in almost every area and in some areas significantly above.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum with frequent opportunities for pupils to use their learning in English and mathematics in other curriculum areas.
- The school's behaviour records show no recorded incidents of bullying, discriminatory or racist behaviour for several years. Pupils and parents state that incidents of unacceptable behaviour are extremely rare and are dealt with

quickly and effectively should they occur.

- Attendance at the school is good with few incidences of pupils being persistently absent.
- The school has used the sports fund to provide increased opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide range of competitive sports and is very proud of its recent success with the federation football team.
- Many opportunities are provided to develop the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning, such as the celebration of 'Wobbly Wednesday', which involved awareness raising and fundraising for the Aniridia Association.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportion of pupils achieving at the greater depth standard in mathematics in key stage 2 assessments is increased.

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

Yours sincerely

Jane Green
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and we agreed the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. I also met with federation leaders and governors including the recently appointed chair of governors. I spoke with a representative from the local education authority. I spoke to a group of parents before school and examined parental questionnaire responses and comments on Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. I also met with a group of pupils from Years 3 to 6. You and I visited all classrooms to see pupils learning. In addition, I scrutinised the school's safeguarding records and procedures. I looked at first aid records and at anonymised records of safeguarding referrals. I also looked at the school's own evaluation of its work and the action plans for further improvement. I analysed the school's historical attainment and looked at the school's own information on pupils' progress. I looked at examples of current pupils' work while in classrooms and at the books of pupils who left Year 6 in July.