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Mrs Sally Greaves
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Greaves

Short inspection of Minety Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 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 the school was judged to be good in January 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The headteacher and leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Together with a motivated team of leaders and governors, you ensure that there is a strong drive and ambition which enables pupils to succeed. You work effectively with others, including parents, to establish a happy and thriving school which places pupils at the heart of your work. All leaders, including governors, share your vision and passion. They work diligently alongside you to ensure that pupils are well cared for academically, socially and emotionally. Parents strongly endorse your work and the impact this is having. For example, parents contacted Ofsted to say, 'All our children are happy and settled at Minety school resulting in children eager to learn in a caring environment.' Another wrote, 'I am very relieved to have such a great school on my doorstep.'

You have created a caring but rigorous approach to teaching and learning. In this way, pupils who need extra help are identified quickly and well supported to make good progress. When this happens, parents are informed and involved so that home and school come together to help the pupils. Individual plans for pupils are effective because they are well matched to pupils' needs. You monitor and check progress robustly and intervene when needed. Teachers use assessment information effectively to identify gaps and then take appropriate next steps to support groups and individuals. Teachers are committed and have the skills and expertise to challenge and support all pupils with different needs effectively.

Pupils' progress in national tests at the end of key stage 2 show writing and mathematics are improving well. Reading outcomes are consistently high and are well above the national average. You have also taken steps to improve pupils' outcomes in key stage 1, including consistent improvement in the quality of teaching of phonics. Consequently results in the Year 1 phonics screening check are now much higher than the national average.

Since the last inspection, you have taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching. You are relentless in your pursuit to get the best for every child. You meet with teachers and hold them to account for ensuring that pupils make good progress. You check groups of learners and clearly identify what they need to do to improve. This information is shared with teachers and pupils. Pupils are involved in editing and improving their own work, which helps them to have a deeper understanding of how to be effective learners. You have also worked effectively to improve the effectiveness of other leaders. In this way, you have built up a skilled team of leaders who take responsibility for different subjects and areas. They are knowledgeable and understand the priorities for the school. As a result, they are taking effective action to continue to make improvements. For example, professional training is well targeted to improve identified aspects of writing and mathematics. Leaders, including governors, know the school's priorities well and their evaluations are accurate and honest.

You also work effectively with governors who are similarly keen and motivated. They check the work of the school effectively and take action to hold you to account when necessary, for example in improving site security. Governors have found a good balance between support and challenge which is serving the school well. Their visits are productive and contribute towards improvement, such as the recent visit of the mathematics link governor.

During the inspection, we agreed areas where further work is still needed. Most significantly in mathematics where, although pupils show good understanding of key concepts such as number and calculation, they do not consistently apply their knowledge quickly enough in a range of situations. They sometimes overly repeat skills before having meaningful opportunities to put them into practice. This prevents pupils from sometimes making more accelerated progress, especially the most able pupils, in terms of their thinking and reasoning in mathematics. In addition, pupils' writing still shows some persistent weaknesses and a lack of consistency in their use and application of spelling, punctuation and grammar. As a result, the overall quality of some pupils' work is reduced and impacts on the standards they reach. This is also compounded by weaknesses in handwriting which also limit the fluency, legibility and overall quality for some pupils in the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You regard pupils' safety and their well-being as a priority. As a result, you take appropriate and timely action to ensure that any concerns about a pupil are followed up. You are tenacious and resilient in ensuring that pupils are well cared for. For example, you have worked with external agencies to protect pupils and

contacted various services if you are concerned that pupils are missing in education. This approach has had a strong impact on the wider culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff, as well as visitors and students, are vigilant and know their responsibilities. They are confident and know what to do and how to respond to keep pupils safe. You ensure that safeguarding arrangements, including mandatory training and pre-employment checks, are fit for purpose.

Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after. They know how to stay safe in a variety of situations, such as when working online. They have confidence in the school staff and report that Minety is a happy school. They are able to explain what bullying is and feel keenly that this is not tolerated at the school. Pupils also enjoy the full range of opportunities they are given to look after each other and make positive contributions to the school day. This is a welcoming school where pupils feel trusted and valued, including those from different communities and who have additional needs.

Inspection findings

- We agreed the first line of enquiry, which examined pupils' current progress in writing and mathematics. This is because there has been an improvement in pupils' outcomes, especially boys' in writing and girls' in mathematics in 2017. However, school leaders are determined to strive for further improvement. Having looked at books and spoken with pupils, there is a strong focus on improving the right aspects of mathematics and writing. These have been appropriately identified by the leadership team.
- Pupils' thinking and reasoning skills in mathematics are not consistently well utilised to bring about rapid progress. However, teachers are now focusing on this and there is firm evidence that pupils are using what they know to talk about mathematics and solve problems. They are beginning to gain more confidence in doing this. For example, pupils in Year 4 were making up statements to explain the relationship between a pair of numbers during the inspection.
- Pupils' writing skills are improving well. They are gaining skills to communicate effectively through the spoken and written word. Teachers make strong links across the curriculum to motivate and inspire pupils to write. Pupils write at length and depth, typically at least at an age-appropriate standard. However, persistent weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar hold some pupils back and stop them reaching even higher standards of which they are capable. Similarly, pupils' handwriting is not developed well enough strategically across the school. Similarly, teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils' handwriting is developed well enough across the school. This can also impede the rate of progress for some pupils.
- My second line of enquiry explored the reasons why pupils' progress in reading is consistently high and what leaders are doing to cultivate this. Leaders are proactive and promote a strong culture and a love of reading. Reading features prominently across the school day and in the wide variety of lessons. Teachers take every opportunity to explore text and its meaning from Reception through to Year 6. They use high-quality texts to enthuse pupils. For example, pupils in Year

3 are enjoying reading 'The Iron Man' and show a strong understanding of the characters and themes in the book. They also show their understanding of the text through their art work.

- Pupils are well targeted and supported in reading. If there are concerns that pupils are falling behind, teachers are quick to identify this and work with the pupils to support them. Support plans are well targeted and agreed with parents. In addition, teachers are acutely aware of doing the 'little things' well. For example, one pupil whose view was typical told me, 'Before I didn't like reading but they found me the books that I love', which has contributed towards rapid progress.
- My third key line of enquiry evaluated how well all groups and individuals are supported to make good progress in the school. This is because pre-inspection analysis was unable to provide enough information about the different groups. During my visit, I found that the school does not have any pupils who speak English as an additional language currently and a few disadvantaged pupils. These pupils are well supported to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and at least keep up with their peers. However, you are continuing to work with pupils and parents of the traveller community, where attendance and outcomes are sometimes below the other school groups. This is something that is known to you and you are taking all necessary steps to work with parents and pupils on an individual basis.
- My fourth key line of enquiry concentrated on the quality of the curriculum and how well this prepares pupils for the next stage in their learning. You have developed an effective approach to the curriculum which ensures that the full range of subjects are taught together and often interconnect. For example, some high-quality science work in Year 6 enabled pupils to test and record their findings in a science experiment using challenging mathematical themes and ideas. This gave pupils a secure understanding of numbers, such as what '0.006' of a second means.
- Teachers use information from their 'gaps analysis' to plan effective sequences of work for different groups of pupils. Similarly, information about pupils' progress is shared with governors who interrogate this effectively to gain a good understanding of pupils' progress across the school and in different subjects. However, as we agreed, there are some instances when the quality of writing is not as strong in other subjects, such as in topic and science because pupils are not given the same high-quality opportunities to write at length and depth.
- Pupils are given choice and autonomy in their learning. This motivates and inspires them to do well. Furthermore, an impressive range of extra-curricular activities including sports, music and forest schools enable pupils to experience learning in many contexts and enhance their personal, social and emotional development.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that pupils:

- develop their thinking and reasoning skills to further their understanding in mathematics
- improve the consistency and accuracy of punctuation, spelling and grammar in independent writing
- improve the quality of handwriting so that pupils can reach the highest standards of which they are capable.

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

Yours sincerely

Stewart Gale
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We agreed the timetable and related activities at the start of the inspection. I worked extensively with you, including reviewing pupils' books together. I scrutinised safeguarding records and we discussed a wide range of matters related to safeguarding, including staff recruitment, training and vetting arrangements. I reviewed evidence to show how you work and liaise with multi-agency partners to keep children safe. Together, we visited lessons across the school. We scrutinised a sample of pupils' workbooks and I spoke with pupils in line with our agreed key lines of enquiry. I also met with representatives of the governing body and reviewed school documents, including the school's self-evaluation summary and samples of governors' visits. I also held a discussion with the local authority adviser. I took full account of the 87 responses on Parent View as well as other surveys, including the 84 free texts received for the inspection.