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Mrs Diana Atkinson  
Executive Headteacher  
Gorsley Goffs Primary School  
Gorsley  
Ross-on-Wye  
Herefordshire  
HR9 7SE

Dear Mrs Atkinson

### **Short inspection of Gorsley Goffs Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 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. Since the previous inspection, you have become an executive headteacher and oversee two schools, Gorsley Goffs and Lea CofE Primary School. You have implemented a successful leadership structure, appointing a head of school and effective leadership team, to ensure that pupils continue to get a good education at Gorsley Goffs.

You have built effectively on the strengths found in the last inspection. Of particular note are the improvements in teaching reading and phonics and early years provision. Standards in these areas are rising year on year. You have high expectations of staff and pupils and make sure that everyone receives the support and challenge that they need to do their best. Governors equally have high expectations and challenge you and your leadership team.

The school's motto of 'show respect and always do your best' is embedded into the culture of the school. Pupils work hard, present their work neatly and are courteous and respectful to each other and all adults. You have made sure that the school continues to be a nurturing and happy place. Consequently, there is a strong sense of pride around the school and both the pupils and staff enjoy working at Gorsley Goffs. Parents appreciate and value the support that their children receive. A typical comment from a parent was, 'This is a wonderful school. My children are extremely happy. The staff are all helpful and work hard for the children.'

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. Increased levels of challenge for the most able pupils have ensured that a greater proportion of pupils are now working at greater depth. As a result, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above national average at the end of key stage 2. There is also a notable improvement in the quality of pupils' writing. Pupils write at length and with flair and imagination. However, there remains work to do in improving pupils' spelling. Leaders also need to assess the wider aspects of the early years curriculum when children join the school in Reception class. This is in order to determine children's starting points in all areas, track their progress and make any adjustments to teaching where needed.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

As the designated lead for safeguarding, the head of school ensures that all staff are fully trained and know precisely what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. All concerns are reported, investigated and kept under review. Further advice and guidance are sought when needed. Records are stored securely, detailed and of good quality. Safer recruitment procedures are adhered to fully and volunteers working in school are appropriately checked. This ensures that adults employed are suitable to work with children. As a result, safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose

In lessons and assemblies, pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Programmes and clear messages, such as 'Speak Out', delivered by visitors and charity organisations, help encourage pupils to report difficult situations. Pupils spoken to said that they feel comfortable reporting any issues to staff members as they trust them. Risk assessments are also undertaken to ensure that all activities are safe. Pupils with medical needs are assessed and appropriate training provided for staff to ensure that they know how to respond to pupils' specific needs in an emergency.

### **Inspection findings**

- You and your leadership team have evaluated the school's current position accurately and honestly. You know precisely where strengths lie and carry out stringent monitoring of teaching and learning, together with robust data analysis, to identify and address areas for further improvement. You are not complacent and strive for even higher standards. As a result, you have devised a detailed plan of action to achieve these goals. Leaders new to post are supported well to develop their skills. They attend and lead training and are ambitious in their pursuit of improvement in their subject areas.
- Governors are highly supportive of the school. They are proactive and forward-looking. They visit classrooms, meet with different subject leaders and help with reading and swimming lessons. Governors have a good understanding of how well the school is performing because they have received training on analysing and interpreting data. They work in close collaboration with all staff and have built good relationships. Teamwork and cohesion are strengths.
- As one governor summarised, 'We work as one family.' Checks made after each

meeting of 'how have we challenged, what have we celebrated and what else do we need to improve?' demonstrate the robustness of governors' own self-evaluation.

- Effective teaching in the early years successfully builds on children's early knowledge and skills. Imaginative and well-planned activities successfully hook and engage children. A real strength is the development of children's literacy skills. Highly effective teaching of letters and sounds prepares children well for learning to read and write. Activities are then planned which require children to apply and develop sounds taught. Impressive levels of concentration and independence were demonstrated by children working in the book corner and writing areas during the inspection. Outdoor areas are also well utilised to promote literacy skills, with children finding letters in the sand tray to spell out short words.
- Historic information shows that, in the past, boys attained less well than girls in the early years. This was not the case for the 2017 cohort and there is no current evidence to suggest that boys make less progress than girls. Both achieve equally well. Leaders carry out observations and use standardised tests to determine children's literacy and numeracy abilities when they join the school. However, they do not assess the wider areas of the early years curriculum, for example physical development and personal, social and emotional development. These aspects are assessed at the end of the autumn term. This reduces leaders' ability to track children's all-round progress from their starting points.
- You accurately identified that phonics was an area for improvement three years ago. Successful action taken has led to a significant rise in standards, which are now above the national average in the Year 1 and Year 2 screening checks. The school's focus on reading generally has also led to an above-average proportion of pupils reading at greater depth at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The development of the school library has increased the range of texts available and has helped encourage pupils develop a love of reading. Pupils read daily and develop good reading habits, such as reading at bedtime. Pupils read fluently, confidently and with good expression. Younger children love sharing books with other children and adults and older pupils have well-developed scanning and comprehension skills. Reading is a strength of the school.
- Pupils' writing is lively and imaginative. They can write at length and for different purposes and audiences. Their writing is equally good in other subjects, such as science and religious education, as the same high standards are expected. Strong links are made between reading and writing. For example, Year 2 pupils were inspired to write their own recipe for a 'marvellous medicine for grandma' following the reading of a Roald Dahl text. Their work was creative and well-structured. Appropriate attention was paid to presentation and the use of grammar and punctuation skills. Pupils are also developing a neat and cursive handwriting style.
- However, pupils' spelling is an area which needs further focus. Pupils use their phonic skills well to spell tricky words, but errors in spelling some basic or common words are not always picked up. Pupils are not provided with enough strategies and guidance to help them improve their spelling.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers assess children's starting points in all areas of the early years curriculum on entry to the school, and use the information to track progress accurately
- teachers provide a range of strategies to help pupils improve their spelling.

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

Yours sincerely

Heather Simpson  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and members of your leadership team and governing body. I also had a telephone conversation with the head of learning and achievement from the local authority. I discussed the work of the school with you and the head of school, including the processes and procedures in place for safeguarding. I visited several classrooms, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books. I listened to pupils read and talked to pupils at lunchtime to gather their views about the school.

I looked at a range of school documents, including the school's information about pupils' achievement. I also reviewed the school's own evaluation of its work, together with the school development plan. I took account of the 69 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View and letters sent in during the inspection. Additional information was collected from parents at the end of the school day. There were 25 responses to the staff questionnaire and their views were fully considered.