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8 March 2018

Mrs Julie Norman
Executive Headteacher
Stogumber CofE Primary School
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Dear Mrs Norman

Short inspection of Stogumber CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 2018, 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 November 2013.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

You are the executive headteacher of Stogumber and Crowcombe primary schools. Since your appointment in September 2014, you have worked diligently with others to bring about some notable improvements across the school. In particular, you have ensured that there are strong processes and systems to look after vulnerable pupils. Together with other leaders, staff and governors, you ensure that this is a happy, vibrant and caring community school which offers a range of high-quality experiences for the pupils, such as sporting and musical events.

There have been a number of staff changes since the last inspection.

You are highly committed to your work and maintain good lines of communication with parents and carers. Every parent who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, said that they would recommend the school to another parent. Responses to Ofsted's online survey include, 'Stogumber is a positive, nurturing school. There is a real sense of community and this is evident amongst both staff and pupils'. Pupils are proud of the school and enjoy coming. This is reflected in the increasing number on the school's roll as well as in pupils' attendance, which has risen markedly and is now at least in line with the national average.

However, you identify that there are still some key areas to further improve pupils' outcomes and raise achievement. Teachers' use of ongoing assessment is not precise enough to ensure that pupils' progress accelerates quickly by building on what they already know, understand and can do. As a result, some pupils do not reach the standards of which they are capable, especially in key stage 2.

Leadership systems to review pupils' progress are used to identify pupils who would benefit from additional support and intervention teaching. This targeted support is beginning to help pupils catch up.

At the last inspection, you were asked to make improvements to pupils' writing. Your work in this regard is ongoing. We discussed how pupils are not consistently presenting high-quality writing, including non-fiction and reports in subjects such as science. Furthermore, we noted that common errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar are still barriers for some pupils in meeting expected standards.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have worked effectively with others, including governors, to create a strong culture for safeguarding in the school. You have ensured that processes and systems for appointing and training staff are rigorous and well maintained. As a result, staff are knowledgeable and conscientious. They report and escalate concerns quickly, which helps to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils. Furthermore, you are tenacious in your work with other agencies. You are uncompromising in ensuring that pupils are safe. You are ready to intervene and challenge if you feel incorrect decisions have been made by other professional agencies.

Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for. They show kindness and respect towards each other. Pupils know what bullying is and have confidence that staff deal with this effectively. Pupils are well supported and encouraged to take an active role in taking care of themselves and others. Staff work effectively with pupils to ensure that the school's values and ethos are reflected in pupils' happiness, well-being and safety. This includes providing high-quality pastoral care for pupils, including newly arrived pupils, who settle quickly.

Inspection findings

- My first key line of enquiry considered how effective the teaching of reading is in raising pupils' achievement in English by the end of key stage 2. This is because, in the past, some pupils did not make consistently strong progress. Leaders' recent actions have ensured that improving reading and spelling is a key focus for development. You have worked closely with the Parent and Teacher Association (PTA), to replenish the library stock so that pupils can have access to a wider pool of books. In addition, teachers are using a high-quality text as the basis for curriculum topics. These positive actions are helping to raise the importance of reading and are enabling pupils to start taking a keener interest in books and literature and use the texts they read as models to improve their

writing skills.

- However, over time some pupils in key stage 2 have not made rapid progress in developing their reading skills. Teaching is not yet consistently ensuring that pupils can use and apply their reading skills to comprehend and draw inferences from a text.
- Teachers' checks on what pupils know, understand and can do are not precise enough. Teachers do not consistently identify what pupils need to do next to more rapidly develop pupils' achievement. As a result, some pupils are not making rapid progress from their starting points.
- The teaching of writing at key stage 2 does not yet enable pupils to consistently use and apply the correct spelling, punctuation and grammar well. This is a barrier for some pupils in meeting national expectations. Most recently, leaders have implemented a new approach to teaching grammar, punctuation and spelling. However, it is too early to see its impact on pupils' outcomes.
- My third key line of enquiry evaluated how well teaching is supporting pupils to make good progress in mathematics. The mathematics subject leader is passionate about her subject and has taken action to improve teachers' planning and their subject knowledge, especially in supporting pupils with reasoning and problem solving. She has also introduced an approach to mathematics which is starting to more rapidly develop pupils' calculation skills.
- However, sometimes teachers do not move the learning on quickly enough. As a result, some middle-attaining and the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to reach the highest standards. Furthermore, the quality of mathematics being planned in other subjects doesn't make the most of opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematics across the curriculum or for a range of real-life purposes. You have considered this as an area for development as part of your approach to the curriculum.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers use precise assessments in reading, writing and mathematics to ensure that their teaching builds on what pupils know, can do and understand so that pupils make rapid progress
- the teaching of reading in key stage 2 enables pupils to apply their comprehension skills well so that pupils have a firm understanding of what they read
- the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar continues to improve so that a greater proportion of pupils write with the accuracy and detail expected for their age.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Bath and Wells, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Somerset. 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 activities for the inspection and sampled pupils' work books to evaluate pupils' progress. I scrutinised safeguarding records and we discussed a wide range of related matters, including staff recruitment, training and staff vetting arrangements. I spoke to pupils and staff about their views of safeguarding. We considered evidence that shows how you work with other agencies to keep children safe. Together, we visited classes across the school at Stogumber and Crowcombe, including to evaluate the teaching of phonics. I also heard selected pupils read from the Reception Year, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6. I met with two representatives of the governing body and reviewed school documents, including the school development plan, subject action plans and the most recent visit note from the local authority adviser. I took full account of the 20 responses on Parent View as well as other information, including free-texts received through the inspection and the online staff survey. I also spoke with pupils throughout inspection activities and during their lunch break.