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Mrs Diane Kingdon
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Kingdon

Short inspection of Cheveley Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 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.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have made sure that the school continues to be a happy and friendly place to work or learn in.

There is no complacency and, although you are retiring at the end of the academic year, you are determined to build on the school's many strengths in the next term and start implementing any needed changes. You are able to do this because you have a good understanding of what the school needs to improve, including the need to develop the curriculum further. You, your deputy headteacher and the governing body work together well to check provision and to identify what could be improved further.

The governing body knows the school well. Governors are reflective about their own practice and provide good challenge when needed to ensure that weaknesses, even when comparatively minor, are tackled quickly.

Teamwork across the school is strong. Members of staff understand what you are trying to achieve and are fully supportive of your plans for future school development. All staff who responded to the staff survey agreed that the school has improved since the last inspection. They are proud to work in the school and feel well supported by the leadership team.

A noteworthy strength in the school is the way that you are deploying additional

staff to give extra help, especially in mathematics, to pupils who are danger of falling behind or who need extra challenge. This is supported well by skilled teaching assistants. They make a good contribution to school life.

Your pupils blossom in school. By Year 6, they are well prepared, both socially and academically, for the next stage of their education. Pupils behave very sensibly throughout the school day, including when attending the well-organised breakfast club. They are friendly, sociable and articulate and are keen to learn. There is a delightful atmosphere on the playground, with older and younger pupils playing together happily and supporting each other well. Younger pupils like the way that older pupils organise clubs, such as basketball or a 'Mini-Olympics', to keep them active at lunchtime.

Pupils enjoy school and keenly take responsibility by being, for example, young leaders, librarians or buddies. The school council gives pupils a good voice in the life of the school. Councillors feel listened to and they are able to contribute effectively to school improvement. For example, at the moment they are focusing on improving outdoor facilities.

Parents and carers are very positive about the school. They rightly feel that their children are well cared for. They welcome the way that you and your staff successfully support children's social and emotional needs, as well as their academic development. Typical comments from parents included, 'The school knows each child as an individual' and, 'My son cannot wait to get to his class each morning.'

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. You ensure that staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibility to keep children safe. They understand the importance of taking prompt action when they have any concerns about a pupil. Members of the governing body undertake their own checks to make sure that the school's safeguarding systems and procedures work effectively.

Pupils feel safe in school. Activities, such as visits from the 'Life Bus', help pupils to learn about the dangers they may face outside school, including e-safety and stranger danger. They are very confident that should they have a problem, it would be dealt with quickly. As one pupil commented, 'We all look after each other.'

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher to confirm the lines of enquiry for my day in school.
- The first of these looked at progress in key stage 1. I wanted to check this because pupils' attainment was lower than normal at the end of Year 2 in 2017.
- I found that, while there was a dip in attainment last year, this reflected a group of pupils who had lower than usual starting points, rather than any weaknesses in provision. School data and a scrutiny of pupils' books confirm that progress in

the current Year 2 is good most of the time. In Year 2, pupils are becoming confident writers and are improving their number skills at a good pace.

- My second line of enquiry focused on the levels of challenge for most-able pupils. This was identified as an area for improvement in the last inspection.
- My observations and the work in pupils' books showed that teaching meets differing needs well most of the time. This enables pupils to make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Many teachers make particularly good use of questioning and discussion to extend the skills and understanding of the most able pupils. However, when visiting lessons together, we saw that there are occasional missed opportunities to move on the learning of the most able pupils even quicker. This happens most often when they have to complete the same piece of work as others before moving on to a more demanding task. We agreed that this should be a priority for improvement over the next year and beyond.
- A further line of enquiry looked at provision in the early years as this has been one of your main priorities for school improvement this year due to changes in staff. I also wanted to check that the needs of boys are met well enough as, historically, their attainment has been consistently lower than that of girls.
- I found that early years provision has been developed significantly over this academic year and meets the needs of children well. There is a rich and stimulating curriculum, both indoors and outdoors. This supports good learning for boys and girls.
- The new teacher is taking good account of the need to engage boys fully in all of the areas of learning. She is doing this well by, for example, linking subjects together. Hence, during the inspection, work on 'The Three Little Pigs' gave children opportunities to build houses, to write lists, to count different objects and to explore the properties of different materials.
- My final line of enquiry examined how you have developed the curriculum since the last inspection, when areas for improvement were identified.
- You have already recognised that this is an area where further improvement is still needed. Your deputy headteacher is currently reviewing the curriculum and recent audits have shown areas that could be developed further, as well as some notable strengths.
- Pupils are very positive about provision in music, art and sport. They say that they have plentiful opportunities to develop skills in these areas, both in lessons and through clubs. They are also very enthusiastic about the teaching of French and how this will help them when they move to secondary school.
- Opportunities for pupils to apply their reading, writing and counting skills in different subjects are much improved since the last inspection. Pupils are now able to practise and reinforce these skills across the curriculum.
- However, I found that work in science, history and geography is uneven in quality. While there is some good work, mainly in upper key stage 2, this is not always the case. I could see in workbooks that teachers do not always expect enough of their pupils so that they are able to develop the full range of skills,

knowledge and understanding required by the national curriculum.

- We agreed that to help improve provision quicker in these subjects, you need to give subject leaders greater opportunity to carry out their own checks on provision so that any inconsistencies can be identified and dealt with more swiftly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is a consistently high level of challenge for the most able pupils
- work in science, history and geography demands enough of pupils and helps them to develop a wider range of skills, knowledge and understanding
- subject leaders in science, history and geography have sufficient time to carry out their own checks on provision so that they can play a fuller part in securing improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Mike Capper
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I made observations of teaching and learning across the school during learning walks with you and your deputy headteacher. I held meetings with school leaders and members of the governing body. I had discussions with parents at the start of the school day and scrutinised the 53 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I analysed the 19 responses to the Ofsted staff survey. I considered a range of information supplied by the school, including checks on the quality of teaching, the school's development plan, school policies and records relating to attendance, and safeguarding procedures. I listened to some pupils reading in lessons and scrutinised pupils' books in different subjects and school assessment information from the current academic year.