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Sharon Hunt
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Dear Mrs Hunt

Short inspection of Milborne St Andrew First School

Following my visit to the school on 8 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in September 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 lead the school with clarity and compassion. You encourage and support staff and, as a result, they are solidly behind you. Much work is going on to ensure that staff have the professional development they need in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Parents are very supportive of the school. They are listened to and they appreciate your open, welcoming approach. Workshops to explain and demonstrate learning approaches are well attended and parents say that these are very helpful. Parents get involved with making improvements to the school. As a result, pupils use the pond and a castaway camp with fire-pit to extend their learning experiences.

Pupils enjoy their learning because it is matched well to their needs and it is interesting. Behaviour is good and the school is a calm, happy place in which to learn. A particular strength of the school is the work you do with other schools in the trust and other local partnerships. This helps not only to support staff in their professional development, but also to bring pupils together for events such as music performances and sport activities. You ensure that you work closely with leaders in the trust and you continue to check how well pupils achieve when they leave this school and move onto the next.

An area for improvement at the previous inspection was to ensure that pupils receive the requisite challenge in lessons to help them extend their thinking. Your

focus is firmly on continuing to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to keep expectations high. As a result, pupils' achievement has shown improvement across the school over the past two years. The proportion of pupils who achieve higher standards has improved and is now above national averages for reading and writing and in line with the national average for mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are vigilant and secure in their knowledge of safeguarding issues. The designated lead for safeguarding ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that a wide range of training is provided for staff. Governors are well informed about the latest safeguarding guidance and they fulfil their role to make the appropriate checks. Recruitment processes are secure. Pupils feel safe and they are safe.

Inspection findings

- We looked at some particular lines of enquiry during my visit. One was to explore how well pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported to make good progress. The proportion of pupils at the school who have SEN and/or disabilities is higher than the national average. You work with a range of professionals to ensure that pupils are correctly identified as needing extra support for their learning.
- Staff have developed a wide range of strategies and skills to provide such support. Teachers and teaching assistants work together closely to ensure that pupils receive extra teaching. As a result, most pupils make good progress from their starting points and most become confident, independent learners. You agree that to improve progress further, pupils need to have clear, precise next steps identified, which are regularly reviewed. This will also support the leadership team in understanding which interventions work well for pupils and which are not as successful.
- Following some lower outcomes in 2016, you have ensured that staff are supported to improve outcomes for pupils. We looked at how well subject leaders make improvements in their subject areas and how effectively they check the difference this makes to pupils' progress. Subject leaders for English and mathematics work alongside their colleagues to make the improvements needed to teaching and learning. For example, a new approach to teaching mathematics has been introduced and supported well by the subject leader. Pupils' books show that this is helping them to really grasp mathematical concepts. Pupils are proud to share their achievements in mathematics and to show their work. As a pupil explained, 'I love maths now, and I know how to do it!'
- Subject leaders are aware that pupils are becoming more confident in their learning following improvements made to teaching. They are also aware that they now need to check the impact of improvements made across the school on the progress that pupils make.

- A current priority is to improve the system that shows pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. You have wisely identified the need to have a more frequent check on progress across the school than happens now. The new assessment system will enable you and the governors to have a clearer view of patterns of achievement for different groups, such as the most able pupils. This work needs to be fully embedded to ensure that any weaknesses in achievement can be quickly identified and improvements put in place.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is a clear system in place to check the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
- subject leaders check the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils are making
- the new assessment system helps leaders to identify and improve any weaknesses in pupils' achievement.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Dorset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tonwen Empson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, visits were made with the headteacher to see learning across the school. Together, we looked at a range of pupils' workbooks. I met with subject leaders. I spoke to staff and pupils informally. I met with a group of pupils to discuss their learning. I had a meeting with several governors, including the chair of the governing body. I met with the chief executive officer of The Greenwood Tree Academy Trust.

I scrutinised key school documents, including those to do with safeguarding, the school improvement plan and the school's self-evaluation document. I looked at recruitment procedures, including the single central record.

I took into account the views gathered from parents at the start of the day, and the 39 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also took account of the five responses from staff to an online staff survey.