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Mrs Carolyn Purchase
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Purchase

Short inspection of Brimpton Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 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 February 2014.

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 ensured that the school has continued to improve. Staff are a happy and collegiate team under your leadership. Parents and carers who spoke to me expressed very positive views about all aspects of the school. They were particularly vocal about improved levels of communication and how welcoming staff are. Parents told me of their disappointment about your impending retirement, but were glad that the governing body had been successful in finding a suitable replacement. You explained to me how work to ensure a smooth transition in leadership is already under way.

Classroom visits showed Brimpton to be a happy place. Because of the size of the school I was able to visit most classes more than once, as well as observing small-group teaching. Pupils were confident to tell me about their work. Children in Reception were very keen to share their work on 3D shapes. I was able to see their progress later in the day when they visited me to name and describe the shapes they had found on their foray into the village after lunch.

Older pupils were also hard at work across the school. Their engagement in learning was strong, although I did witness some disengagement when pupils found that activities were not challenging enough. Pupils' attitudes to school are very positive. They told me that they enjoy coming to school, because teachers plan exciting things to do most of the time. They particularly enjoy learning in the outside environment. Much of their learning is connected to real life. Writing a detailed set

of instructions for cooking outdoors as part of their preparation for a canoeing and camping expedition is a good example of this. Pupils told me of their excitement about the prospect of singing in a local theatre with pupils from other schools later in the week. They were also positive about the wide range of clubs they can attend during and after school.

At the time of the last inspection, inspectors acknowledged the many strengths of the school. These included leaders' work with external agencies, the inclusive ethos of the school and the good behaviour of pupils. Inspectors also identified the need for teachers to use up-to-date assessment information to set work at the right level for pupils, particularly for the few who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. They also recognised that leaders needed to look more closely at the progress that different groups of pupils made over time. You and your staff have addressed these matters successfully. Provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is strong. Parents are particularly positive about this aspect of the school, telling me that their children are making good progress because of the focused support they receive. You track the progress of pupils well. This means that staff are aware of pupils who are in danger of falling behind. This includes the few pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with SEN and/or disabilities.

Since the last inspection, you have continued the important process of self-evaluation. You were able to explain the school's many strengths, as well as the priorities for development. You recognise the need to increase the proportion of pupils across the school achieving more highly. You agreed with me that development planning should be reviewed and further refined, so that it more accurately reflects your self-evaluation and fully addresses the main priorities for improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

Arrangements to safeguard pupils are effective. Policies, procedures and day-to-day routines are sound. Importantly, the culture to safeguard pupils is strong. Staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities to protect children. Their training is up to date. They know what to do and who to talk to if they have concerns.

All parents who spoke to me or completed Ofsted's online survey expressed an opinion that their children feel safe in school. Pupils told me that they feel safe in school. They talked knowledgeably about staying safe online. They also know what to do in the event of a fire or other kind of emergency.

Inspection findings

- The curriculum is a strength of the school, including in the early years. It meets the needs of pupils well. Teachers appreciate the freedom they have to innovate and change subject content when appropriate. Pupils are very positive about how teachers make learning interesting. Their work in books and displays throughout the school shows an appropriate breadth and balance of subjects. A recent focus on developing writing across curriculum subjects is having a positive impact on

the progress pupils make in this key subject.

- Pupils' personal development is well served by the curriculum. Because of this, they thrive in school and become rounded individuals by the time they leave Brimpton. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their trips out of the school into the local community or further afield. Residential visits to places such as the Brecon Beacons or Snowdon are commonplace.
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds do well at the school. Leaders and staff have a clear understanding of their individual needs and provide appropriate additional support when required. Small numbers of disadvantaged pupils make it difficult to compare their academic outcomes with other pupils. However, it is clear that leaders and governors monitor the progress of this key group well. As a result, most pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds make good progress as they move through the school.
- School leaders and governors realise that the proportion of pupils who achieve a greater depth of learning in English and mathematics needs to be higher. Teachers are also aware that they need to develop their strategies to ensure that most-able pupils are more consistently challenged at an appropriate level. This now needs to be given a higher priority in improvement planning.
- Self-evaluation of the school's strengths and areas to develop is sound. However, the school's development plan does not focus clearly enough on the main priorities to improve. Linking self-evaluation and improvement planning in a more concise way will enable leaders and staff to have greater clarity about the main areas they wish to develop, as well as the specific actions required to achieve success.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- school development planning is further refined, so that it better reflects leaders' self-evaluation and focuses more acutely on the key areas that need improving
- a greater proportion of pupils achieves more highly in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Clive Close
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I visited classrooms, assessing the progress pupils were making and talking to them about their learning. I observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, at breaktime and as they moved around the school. I met with the headteacher, the chair and vice-chair of governors accompanied by four other governors, a group of teachers, non-teaching support staff, and also with a group of pupils. I talked to parents at the start of the school day and took into account 15 replies to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire and accompanying text messages. I talked to a representative of the Diocese of Oxford on the telephone and received a written briefing from a representative of the local authority. A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including safeguarding records, pupils' progress information, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, policies, and minutes of governing body meetings.