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Dear Mrs Gill

Short inspection of Netherfield Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 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 October 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You have built on the strengths identified at the time of the last inspection, where your ambitious leadership was recognised. Since then you have further developed your team of teachers, so that they have become not only great teachers but also highly effective leaders themselves. The whole staff team works together with incredible cohesion. Together you share a passion to make a difference to outcomes for all pupils. Members of the team enjoy working together to achieve impressive outcomes, academically and socially, for pupils.

It is no surprise that your school is so popular. Pupils love the curriculum and how kind and helpful their teachers are. Parents come from miles around because they know that their children will get a very good education. Many of the 38 positive written comments from parents on Parent View were about the school's nurturing and creative ethos. One parent told me: 'The school is so nurturing they care for my child like he was one of their own.'

Your expertise and experience is greatly valued. The local authority highly

appreciates the support you give to other schools in East Sussex. As a national leader of governance your chair of governors also supports other governing bodies in addition to making sure that Netherfield's governing body is highly effective. Increasingly, your staff are sharing their experience and expertise beyond the school too. As you recognise, this experience in other schools only helps add to what you can provide to your pupils and makes sure that you never sit back with complacency. You are always looking to do the next thing to make Netherfield even better.

Standards at the end of every key stage are high because pupils make rapid progress due to the highly effective teaching they receive. Progress through key stage 2 has been significantly better than that found nationally for the last three years in reading and mathematics. Progress in writing is strong, but some weaknesses in pupils' spelling mean that it is not as impressive as in reading and mathematics. Nonetheless, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 is very high. Outcomes in the phonics screening check fell slightly in 2017 because of the high proportion of pupils in the cohort who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. You have identified that this group needs extra support to help them catch up. As a result, you have provided additional teaching which is already having a strong impact.

At the time of the previous inspection in October 2013 the inspector recognised very many strengths, especially around leadership and management and the behaviour of pupils, which were both graded outstanding. These strengths have been built upon, with teachers now having a much greater impact on standards outside of their class in their roles as subject leaders. I saw only impeccable behaviour during my visit to the school. Pupils are characteristically engrossed in their learning, they work well collaboratively and share ideas and views with enthusiasm. There are hardly any recorded incidents of poor behaviour and even then they are very minor. Back in October 2013 the inspector asked you to further improve teaching and achievement in writing and mathematics so that pupils achieved the very highest standards and applied their skills in other subject areas. Current pupils apply their writing skills exceptionally well in their topic work, and this has helped standards in writing improve at key stage 1 and key stage 2.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team and governing body have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Recruitment checks are thorough and all required training for staff is completed regularly.

Leaders know the community and families well and do all they can to support them and keep them safe. This includes helping parents to keep their children safe online.

Leaders work well with families and other professionals from a range of local authorities to support the most vulnerable pupils, including those who are in the care of local authorities. Record-keeping about this work is very detailed and up to date.

The school tackles persistent and unexplained absence very rigorously because staff know that pupils are safe when they are in school. Despite the school making every possible effort to encourage good attendance a few pupils are still absent too frequently.

Inspection findings

- Current pupils across the school make rapid progress in reading and mathematics. For example, pupils in Year 1 who only just met the reading 'early learning goal' in the Reception Year are now reading challenging texts fluently and with expression. Progress is so strong because of the highly effective and challenging teaching over time. Teachers have expert subject knowledge that allows them to quickly tackle any misconceptions and change pupils' work to speed up progress.
- In mathematics, pupils develop their skills in fluency, problem-solving and reasoning very well because of the effective use of visual models (diagrams) and practical apparatus. In English, pupils develop a sophisticated understanding of punctuation and grammar and apply this well. However, spelling remains a relative weakness, which makes pupils' progress slightly slower in writing. Leaders are aware of this and have introduced a more personalised approach to teaching spelling.
- Published assessment information shows that disadvantaged pupils make faster progress than other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are generally developing their knowledge, understanding and skills very well in English and mathematics. In some years small groups of disadvantaged pupils who also have SEN and/or disabilities do not make as much progress as others. There is an admirable ambition to help those who have fallen behind to catch up, and additional funding is used very appropriately to do this.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and highly interesting. It prepares pupils very well for their next stage of education and life in modern Britain. Pupils are also successfully challenged to improve their physical health and well-being through a number of well-thought-out programmes. Leaders encourage teachers to use published resources that are carefully 'cherry-picked' to suit the needs of Netherfield's pupils without making teachers invent too many things from scratch. The curriculum is enriched extensively by trips and visits including to a lifeboat station on the coast, various attractions in London and the opera at Glyndebourne.
- Pupils' writing skills are applied very well throughout the curriculum. This helps pupils to demonstrate their growing knowledge in a variety of different subjects, including science and history. Pupils make significant and sustained progress in a wide range of subjects. This progress is strongest where staff have particular expertise and/or interests. This is seen, for example, in science, French and art, or where specialist teachers are used, as in dance and music. In a very few subjects pupils' skills are tracked, but how they will be developed and built upon

is not well thought-out in advance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they evaluate and build on their current work to improve pupils' spelling, to further accelerate progress in writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Lee Selby
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you regularly throughout the day to discuss various aspects of school leadership. We carried out two learning walks together, visiting all classes at least once to observe learning and talk to pupils about their work. I met with all of the teachers to discuss their leadership roles and to look at a wide variety of pupils' work together. I met with three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. I held a telephone call with a representative of the local authority. I spoke to parents before school and considered 58 responses to Parent View including 43 free-text comments. I also read two letters from parents. I considered 21 responses to the confidential staff survey and 43 responses to the online pupil survey. I scrutinised a wide range of school documentation, including documents relating to safeguarding, self-evaluation, pupils' progress and governance.