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Mrs Sharron Morton
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Morton

Short inspection of Binsted Church of England School

Following my visit to the school on 20 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 June 2014.

This school continues to be good.

You have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Academic standards remain high, and parents and pupils think very highly of both Binsted school and your leadership. With governors, you evaluate the school accurately. You celebrate the many strengths of the school and show a clear determination to bring about further improvement. You have, rightly, identified poor attendance as detrimental to pupils' education and you have already introduced strategies to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. You are also working hard to raise further the level of challenge for the most able pupils.

You, the governors, and your leadership team lead a school in which pupils are happy, feel very safe and enjoy learning. It is highly valued by pupils, staff, parents and the wider community. As one parent stated: 'Binsted school is an integral part of the community. It is more than a school. It is a thriving part of what we all do locally.'

All of the staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey feel proud to work at the school and all believe that the school has improved since it was last inspected. You and your governors lead a motivated team whose members are appreciative of the importance you place on their professional development and a healthy work-life balance. Staff thoroughly enjoy working at the school, and parents are very appreciative of the strong relationships forged between pupils and teachers. One

parent commented about how much they appreciated the teachers' dedication and willingness to discuss issues, 'even at five o'clock on a Friday afternoon!'

Pupils relish the many opportunities they are given to take on responsibilities and appreciate the high level of trust that staff place in them. They enjoy serving as 'young governors' and being able to run lunchtime clubs for other pupils. Pupils know and value the school's motto 'faith, hope and love; but the greatest of these is love'.

Governors are actively involved in the school and have a thorough understanding of its strengths and areas for development. They are committed to further improvement and provide you with consistent and effective levels of support and challenge. Your shared determination is helping you to tackle issues such as poor attendance and the need to provide an even greater level of challenge, particularly in writing, for the most able pupils in key stage 2.

Children make good progress in the early years and are well prepared for entry into Year 1. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development continues to be above the national average. Pupils attain high standards, in all subjects, at the end of key stage 1. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, at the end of key stage 2, is above the national average. More pupils are now attaining the higher standards in these subjects.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding procedures and policies are fit for purpose, and you ensure that keeping children safe is at the front of everyone's mind. You, along with leaders, governors, and the administrative officer, ensure that stringent pre-recruitment checks are complete and that record-keeping is detailed and secure. Your staff share your determination to ensure that no child 'slips through the net'. They seamlessly take responsibility for raising and following up concerns in your absence.

Pupils feel very safe. They spoke confidently about the impact of teaching they have received, such as junior road safety, cycling proficiency and internet safety. Several pupils agreed that one teacher talks about online safety, 'every time we open a laptop!', and one pupil went on to tell me about the difference this had made to his confidence. The training he received enabled him to report a minor incident of misuse of social media which was quickly addressed.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we agreed that I would focus on the improvements made to teaching and learning in mathematics in key stage 2, and the impact of actions taken to ensure better progress for most-able pupils in key stage 2, especially in writing. I also considered the quality of the curriculum and the impact of action taken by school leaders to raise standards in the teaching of phonics in the early years and in key stage 1. Finally, I looked at the impact of action taken by leaders to improve attendance.

- In mathematics, the progress made by pupils reaching the end of key stage 2 in 2017 improved from the previous year and is now in line with the rates of progress made by all pupils nationally. However, your aspirations are high, and you were disappointed with these results. You identified mathematics as an area in which progress can further improve.
- Since the start of the year, leaders have taken effective action to identify gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding and to ensure that teaching is addressing the gaps effectively. You monitor carefully the quality of teaching and learning and hold termly progress meetings. This enables you to review, in detail, how actions taken have helped pupils to make progress. Encouragingly, monitoring records and pupils' work show that the teaching of mathematics in key stage 2 is now meeting your high expectations and that progress is improving. Pupils speak enthusiastically about mathematics and enjoy their reasoning and problem-solving tasks.
- Improving the teaching of writing, so that even more pupils achieve the higher standards at the end of key stage 2, is another area that you have identified for action. Leaders have given clear direction for ways to improve the quality of pupils' spelling, and I saw convincing evidence of how rigorously this is being followed by staff. Consequently, standards in spelling are improving. You clearly articulate other strategies you expect to see used in order to secure improvement in other areas of writing. However, these strategies are not used consistently in key stage 2, and evidence of monitoring is sparse. Although pupils are working at the expected standard in writing, and they communicate fluently, the most able pupils are not yet challenged enough.
- Pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum. They are learning to understand their place in their local national and global communities. Pupils enjoy times when they work together in their house groups during the whole-school topic weeks. You are now beginning to introduce greater levels of challenge through each of the curriculum subjects.
- In 2017, there was a fall in the proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check. You acted decisively and worked with your senior leader to secure improvement in the teaching of phonics. Teachers and leaders regularly check how well pupils are progressing, and adapt their planning to meet pupils' needs. As a result, pupils in the early years and key stage 1 are making good progress.
- Last year pupils' attendance dropped to well below the national average and remains well below the national average this academic year. You prefer an informal approach to parents and, for a few families, the support you have provided has been successful in raising attendance for their children. However, governors have, appropriately, challenged you to use other strategies as there is limited impact from the work you have done so far, and overall attendance continues to decline.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to improve the quality of the teaching of writing in key stage 2 so that the most able pupils are challenged sufficiently and more attain the higher standards
- they improve pupils' attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average.

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

Yours sincerely

Clare Morgan
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the governors to review your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. With you, or the assistant headteacher, I visited classes to observe pupils' learning across the school. I looked at a range of work in pupils' books, spoke to pupils around the school, and had a discussion with the local authority's school improvement adviser. I took account of the 49 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered the 45 free-text comments from parents. I also met some parents at the start of the school day. I considered the five responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 67 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. I looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, and checked the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, including those related to recruitment.