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Mr Chris Kamin  
Headteacher  
Ruishton Church of England Primary School  
Newlands Road  
Ruishton  
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Dear Mr Kamin

### **Short inspection of Ruishton Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 22 May 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.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

You and your leadership team provide a safe and purposeful learning environment for all pupils. You have ensured that the school is an orderly community where pupils behave well and look after each other. Relationships are warm and based on mutual respect. Pupils enjoy their learning and are proud of their school. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved with their children's learning. For example, on the day of the inspection, you invited parents to an 'Inspire Day' where they shared their children's learning experiences.

At the previous inspection you were asked to improve attainment in mathematics and ensure that there are more opportunities for pupils to solve problems and use their mathematical knowledge in a range of other subjects. Your work in this regard has been partially effective, but outcomes in mathematics at key stage 2 remain weaker than in reading and writing.

You were also asked at the time of the previous inspection to improve the achievement of children in the Reception Year. You and your staff have ensured that the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has been above the national average for three of the four years since the last inspection.

There have been a number of changes in staffing and to the governing body since the previous inspection. Over the last two years, leaders and governors have been more focused than previously on remedying the remaining weaknesses in the school's performance. Governors are providing greater challenge in holding leaders to account for the school's performance.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and are fit for purpose. Pre-employment checks on adults working at the school meet statutory requirements. All staff have regular and appropriate training.

Staff who spoke with me were knowledgeable and understood how to respond to any concerns should they arise. Parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children are safe and well looked after at Ruishton. Governors ensure they keep up to date with training and routinely check arrangements for safeguarding. Working with senior leaders, governors foster an effective culture of safeguarding at the school.

### **Inspection findings**

- We agreed the key areas to focus on at the start of the inspection. These were in line with some of the identified priorities in your school improvement plan. First, we looked at how effectively leaders are improving teaching and pupils' progress in mathematics. Following poor key stage 2 outcomes in mathematics in 2015, pupils' progress improved significantly in 2016, but declined again in 2017. Progress in mathematics remains weaker than progress in reading and writing. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards at the end of key stage 2 in reading and writing was above the national average in 2017, but attainment in mathematics was not so strong.
- Since the appointment of a new mathematics leader, teaching in mathematics has improved and is now more consistent across the school. When we looked at pupils' work and talked to them during lessons, it was apparent that pupils now have more opportunities to reason, solve problems and apply their mathematical skills. Teachers are now checking pupils' understanding more effectively, and are taking action to try to ensure that pupils do not fall behind.
- Leaders check that teachers are following the new ways that they are expected to work with pupils. However, they do not yet check how well they are doing it and which aspects are most effective in improving progress. Leaders' judgements of the quality of teaching are still not sharp enough. In particular, they do not base their judgements securely enough on their use of a wide range of evidence from observing lessons, pupils' work and progress information.
- I then went on to check how well leaders and governors are meeting the needs of disadvantaged pupils across the school. This was because, despite the fact that the majority of pupils in the school met national expectations at the end of key stages 1 and 2, fewer disadvantaged pupils achieved as well. Generally, this group did not achieve as well as other pupils at the expected standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of both key stages.

Additionally, a lower proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieved the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics, in both key stages, than other pupils nationally.

- Leaders and teachers know the disadvantaged pupils well and have put social and emotional support in place so that pupils can develop the skills and resilience needed to become effective learners. Nevertheless, the school's strategy for the use of pupil premium funding does not meet requirements. At present, leaders and governors do not evaluate the effectiveness of their actions with sufficient rigour. As a result, they are not able to analyse which approaches are the most or least successful, and why. Leaders acknowledge, correctly, that there is more to do to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Where teachers assess that disadvantaged pupils are in danger of falling behind, they receive additional teaching to help ensure that they keep pace with their peers. School tracking shows that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is improving and they are now making similar rates of progress to other pupils in the school with similar starting points. However, although they are keeping pace, the gaps between their attainment and that of the other pupils are not narrowing.
- Current plans for improvement in mathematics and for disadvantaged pupils are focused on the introduction of different methods of teaching and providing staff with relevant training opportunities. Leaders have done this with the intent of improving the quality of teaching. However, the plans are not clear about how the intended actions will result in an improvement in pupils' achievement. As a consequence, it is difficult for leaders and governors to evaluate the effectiveness of their actions.
- Governors have refined their systems for checking that leaders undertake the planned actions, and are becoming more challenging in their questions to leaders. However, they are not yet evaluating with sufficient rigour how effective key actions have been or how well leaders are fulfilling their roles.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- subject leaders are effective in securing improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes in mathematics through rigorous monitoring and focused support for teachers
- plans to raise standards are more precise and measurable, including the strategy for disadvantaged pupils
- governors continue to refine their systems for scrutinising and analysing key priorities in greater depth so that they can evaluate effectiveness more precisely.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Ross  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I visited classes together with you and your mathematics leader. We looked at the work in pupils' books during lessons, as well as looking separately at samples of work. I talked with pupils during our visits to the classrooms as well as in informal situations and on the playground.

I met with you and members of your leadership team during the inspection and spoke with your administrator. I also met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body.

I took account of 50 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. I also considered 22 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 33 responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire.

I reviewed the school's website and information about the school's academic performance. I considered a range of documents, including your summary of the school's effectiveness, the school's improvement plan and other documents and reports. I also looked at documents related to safeguarding.