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Janet Knott  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Knott

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

Following my visit to the school on 5 June 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 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Under your strong and reflective leadership, leaders and governors have successfully created a school community with a 'family feel'. It is both nurturing and a place of high-quality learning. As one parent wrote, 'Not only have my children been very happy here, we have watched them thrive and excel in an environment where they are made to feel safe and confident.' You aspire for Selborne to be outstanding, and you are clear about what needs to improve to make it so. You have earned the confidence and respect of staff, governors, parents and carers. All staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire said that they are proud to work at the school. In view of your decision to retire, governors have appointed a new headteacher, who takes up her post in September 2018.

Pupils love their small and welcoming school. They said their lessons are 'as fun as possible', and their teachers are kind and helpful. During my visits to lessons, I was struck by how much pupils have a thirst for learning. They support each other well in their tasks. For example, in a Year 1 and Year 2 mixed-age class, pupils were helping each other to check their work carefully for commas, while writing a list of items for Buzz Lightyear to put in his lunchbox.

At the time of the inspection, the chair of the governing body had only been in post for four days. Governors understand their statutory duties well and are very clear about their new roles. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, so they question and support you effectively. Governors bring a wide variety of professional and personal skills to the school and, as a result, make

a valuable contribution to leadership. They visit regularly to see things for themselves, and to talk to staff and pupils. They are deeply committed to unlocking the full potential in all pupils.

The previous inspection noted many strengths of the school, including a commitment to continuous improvement, strong early years provision and good progress. These remain strengths of the school. Earlier this year, you received a ministerial letter congratulating the school on being in the top 1% of primary schools in England for Year 6 pupils' achievement in writing by the end of key stage 2. In addition to writing, their attainment was higher than the national average both for the expected and for the higher standards in reading and mathematics.

The previous inspection noted that there was a need to develop the role of subject leaders in contributing to school improvement. Middle leaders are now empowered and lead their subjects effectively.

You understand the many strong attributes of Selborne Church of England Primary School but also know that there are still areas to improve on. You have identified that the most able pupils in the school are not always stretched across the whole curriculum, in the way they are in English and mathematics. We also agreed that some pupils in key stage 1 are not challenged enough in mathematics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

School leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of a high quality. Any necessary actions are taken without delay. All staff and governors are appropriately trained in identifying potential signs of abuse. Leaders have established strong relationships with external agencies. Staff are vigilant in following up any welfare concerns they have about a pupil. You know your pupils and their families well.

Pupils said that they feel safe in school. They are confident that there is always someone to talk to should they have a worry. As one pupil said, 'Teachers always listen and help you. They will try and understand what we are going through.' Pupils appreciate the Year 6 peer mentors who help resolve disagreements, knowing that adult intervention is always there if needed. Pupils told me that there is 'not really' bullying in the school and that teachers would 'sort it out' if there were. Pupils show a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. All parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire think that their children are safe in school. As one parent commented, 'I truly believe my son could not have been in safer hands.'

### **Inspection findings**

- At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed to look at specific aspects of the school's work, including the effectiveness of the curriculum; challenge in English and mathematics for the most able pupils in key stage 1 and early years; and the effectiveness of the role of subject leaders.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is exciting and relevant to the pupils,

making the most of the local area and outdoor spaces. It is full of opportunities to experience learning in many forms, providing pupils with the knowledge and skills to learn well. The pupils were keen to tell me about their recent trip to see the Mary Rose, effectively supporting their learning about the Tudors. High-quality displays throughout the school show pupils' good work in a wide range of subjects. Music is at the heart of the curriculum, and pupils have many opportunities to perform to an audience over the course of the school year. Environmental issues are important to the pupils at Selborne. They are currently looking at ways of reducing plastic use in the school. Democracy also plays an important part in the life of the school. Every pupil is a member of the school council. As a result, every pupil's voice is heard on areas of school improvement, such as the current development of the playground. Leaders have introduced an effective assessment system for all subjects. Leaders acknowledge, however, that the starting points of the most able pupils are not fully considered in subjects other than English and mathematics. Stretching the most able pupils in all subjects is, rightly, a focus for the school.

- Scrutiny of pupils' books from key stage 1 showed that pupils are routinely challenged in their English lessons and they make strong progress. There are many opportunities for them to write at length to a high standard. During my visits to lessons, I observed how children in early years are effectively encouraged to think independently and solve problems for themselves. Leaders have introduced new teaching strategies in mathematics, including an increase in the use of practical apparatus, to ensure that pupils' understanding of concepts is deep. As a result, pupils have a very strong understanding of place value and the number system. However, we agreed that not enough is done to ensure that pupils are provided with appropriate levels of challenge, in order for more of them to reach a higher standard in mathematics by the end of key stage 1.
- Subject leaders play an integral part in the good provision of the school. They have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching. They have regular opportunities to use their specialist subject knowledge to coach and support staff. Subject leaders have an informed understanding of how well pupils are doing by moderating assessments and by analysing information about pupils' progress. They regularly meet with teachers to discuss pupils' progress, as well as any barriers that individual pupils may be facing in their learning. As a result, any pupil who is falling behind is swiftly identified and timely, well-planned interventions are put in place. Subject leaders contribute effectively to whole-school improvements.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' starting points in subjects across the curriculum are considered more consistently, particularly to provide greater challenge for the most able pupils
- the pupils in key stage 1 are provided with the level of challenge they need in mathematics, so that more reach the higher standards by the end of the key stage.

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

Lea Hannam  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher to discuss the school's effectiveness. You accompanied me on visits to lessons to observe pupils' learning, talk to pupils and look at their work. Together, we looked at the quality of pupils' work in books. I considered 33 responses from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and their free-text comments. I spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day. I also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority and met with the middle leader responsible for English. Responses to the staff and pupils' questionnaires were also considered. I met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body, and formally spoke to a group of pupils about their school. I evaluated the school's safeguarding arrangements. A wide range of documents was examined, including the school's self-evaluation; school improvement planning; information about pupils' progress; governors' minutes; and various school policies.