

2 July 2018

Mr Oliver Burcombe  
Headteacher  
Crawley Down Village Church of England School  
Hophurst Drive  
Crawley Down  
Crawley  
West Sussex  
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Dear Mr Burcombe

### **Short inspection of Crawley Down Village Church of England School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 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 September 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your clear vision for the school successfully promotes pupils' well-being, strong Christian values and academic achievement. You are highly reflective about the value of the changes you have put in place and give equal consideration to further improvements. Your evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate and you know your pupils well. Leaders and staff work productively together, united in supporting your vision. All staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire report that they feel proud to work at the school.

Like you, governors have high aspirations for the school. They are committed to further improvement and demonstrate an insightful understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They visit regularly, and their monitoring provides them with sufficient knowledge and understanding to challenge school leaders effectively. You welcome, and act on, helpful external advice from the local authority. Collaboration with other schools in the locality provides you and your team with beneficial support and opportunities. In return, your leadership is used more widely as a helpful example for others.

An overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire would recommend the school to others. All parents spoken to commented positively about how approachable and friendly the staff are, and how well the staff know the children and the families. One parent spoke for many when she said: 'The staff genuinely care. They go above and beyond.'

Pupils have a good understanding of the school's Christian values. These are evident in the strong and caring relationships both with each other and with adults. An ethos of mutual respect and consideration for others permeates the school. Pupils spoke passionately about the importance of 'treating others the way you would like to be treated', and that 'everyone is a friend in this school.' Pupils say that they enjoy school and that teachers make learning fun. This is reflected in the school's overall high attendance figure and in pupils' positive behaviour.

Children make a strong start during Reception Year. Adults' skilled questioning and thoughtful attention to the curriculum develop children's understanding well. For example, as part of transition to Year 1, children explored the stages of a butterfly while relating it to their own changes. Children are developing a good understanding of sounds and letters and are encouraged to read often. Parents of children in Reception were very positive about the progress their children are making. One parent commented: 'The school has simply been exemplary and met all my child's needs with the utmost care and attention.'

Leaders' careful monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress ensures that pupils receive timely support when needed. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities achieve well because of the attention the school gives to their well-being and academic progress.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. The school's house system is highly valued by all. Weekly 'high five' assemblies celebrate achievement, and reward systems are linked closely to the school's core values. Pupils enjoy a wide range of after-school clubs and visits to interesting places, which builds on their learning.

Following the previous inspection, you were asked to ensure that teachers plan and provide work that is challenging for all pupils, particularly the most able, in writing. You were also asked to ensure that pupils were clear about how to improve their work. Work in pupils' books shows increasing evidence of challenge for the most able pupils, though you recognise that there is more to do. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to write regularly at length and for different purposes across a variety of subjects. You are sensibly ensuring that pupils develop their handwriting skills and pay greater attention to their presentation. During the inspection, adults skilfully supported children in Reception to write 'tricky words'. Pupils in Year 1 wrote enthusiastically about a recent walk to a local allotment, linked to their topic on growing. Teachers, on the whole, follow the school's feedback policy, and as a result pupils are becoming increasingly successful at improving their work.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The safety and well-being of pupils at the school is a high priority. School leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and accurate, and relevant recruitment checks are fully completed. You ensure that all staff receive appropriate training, including on their duty to prevent extremism and radicalisation.

Staff are alert to concerns because they know their pupils so well. Concerns are reported swiftly and are scrupulously followed up by the designated safeguarding leads. Your meticulous recording of any concerns ensures that no important information is missed. You work effectively with relevant agencies and other professionals to ensure that the right support is made available to vulnerable pupils and their families.

Pupils say that they feel safe. One pupil confidently told me: 'Teachers never let you do something unless they know it's safe. They are very strict on that.' All staff, and the vast majority of parents, report that the school keeps pupils safe. Incidents of bullying are rare, and pupils feel confident talking to adults about anything that is worrying them.

You have carefully considered how parents and visitors enter and exit the school and have taken sensible steps to ensure pupils' safety. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. Their understanding of e-safety is further enhanced by visitors, such as the local police community support officer, and workshops for parents.

## **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including the effectiveness of the teaching of writing; provision for the most able pupils; provision for disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils; and how areas of the curriculum other than English and mathematics develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- You have sensibly ensured that the teaching of writing continues to be a top priority in the school development plan. You recognise that the teaching of this subject needs to become more consistently effective across the school. This is because in 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth in writing at the end of key stage 1 and the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard and the higher standard in writing at the end of key stage 2 were below those found nationally.
- Work in pupils' books shows that younger pupils are successfully applying their understanding of letters and sounds to their writing. Teachers ensure that older pupils apply their grammar knowledge in extended pieces of writing. There has been a whole-school focus on improving spelling, which shows signs of positive impact. Teachers encourage pupils to check and edit their work carefully. In order to capture pupils' interest, you have given careful thought to a range of writing tasks and have provided links to interesting texts. Sometimes, pupils are not always clear about what they are learning, and this can slow their progress.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard at the end of key stage 2 in reading and mathematics exceeded national figures; however, it remained below the national picture in writing. Outcomes for the most able pupils in key stage 1 have remained below the national figures overall for the last two years. As a result, you have rightly sharpened teachers' focus on this group of pupils. Pupils are responding well to additional teaching, particularly in writing

and mathematics. A review of pupils' work showed that these pupils are increasingly challenged by the work teachers provide and by teachers' feedback.

- Thoughtful use of additional funding for the low number of disadvantaged pupils ensures that extra support is matched well to pupils' individual needs. Leaders' detailed records for each pupil show that progress is tracked carefully. Teachers engage in professional discussion about pupils who are not making the progress of which they are capable. They look carefully at the barriers to pupils' learning, seeking effective solutions from a wide range of specialists where appropriate. The school's performance information and pupils' work show that currently these pupils are making strong progress.
- The curriculum provides many interesting opportunities to enhance learning and develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. For example, pupils have greatly enjoyed learning about the history of the village and taking part in local field trips. In subjects such as science, pupils' practical skills are starting to be developed well. Pupils have opportunities to successfully take part in a number of sporting competitions. Attractive displays illustrate the attention the school gives to developing pupils' skills in art.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils are routinely challenged so that a higher proportion exceed age-related expectations
- the teaching of writing leads to improved outcomes by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.

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 West Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Frances Nation  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection we visited all classrooms together with the deputy headteacher and talked to pupils about their work. I scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including information about pupils' achievement, leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. I met with pupils from Reception, key stage 1 and key stage 2, and heard them read. I held meetings with middle leaders. I looked at a wide range of pupils' work with

you, the deputy headteacher and the English leader. I met with three members of the governing body, including the vice-chair of governors. I held a telephone call with a representative of the local authority. I considered 25 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 83 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as speaking with a number of parents.