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7 September 2018

Mr William Webb  
Headteacher  
The Ridgeway Church of England (C) Primary School  
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Dear Mr Webb

### **Short inspection of The Ridgeway Church of England (C) Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 July 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. The school is a joyful place. Pupils are bursting with pride in their school and all it has to offer. They thrive in a caring community, benefiting from effective teaching complemented by a rich range of after-school activities and visits to places of interest. The school's core values of 'caring, perseverance and respect' permeate school life. Parents speak highly of the school and are full of praise for your leadership. One spoke of the 'remarkable changes' you have led in your year and a half as the headteacher. Comments such as 'I couldn't recommend this school and its inspirational headteacher more' and 'we feel very lucky that our children are able to attend such a wonderful village school' typified parents' views.

Since taking up post in January 2017, you have brought fresh energy, and insight. The school is improving on all fronts. You have worked well with your small staff team, delegating and tightening leadership. Subject leaders are playing an increasingly effective part in moving the school forward. Together, you are leading the school on a journey to excellence.

Teaching is increasingly effective. Pupils typically make strong progress in English and mathematics. At the last inspection, the school was asked to improve opportunities for pupils to write at length and apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum. Work to achieve this has been successful. Rightly, you recognised that in some cases this resulted in a lack of sufficient focus on pupils' learning in other subjects. You have rectified the situation. Pupils are now typically learning well across all subjects.

You have made sure that leaders' self-evaluation is accurate and used well to identify matters for attention and secure improvements. You are clear that leaders' understanding of the quality of some parts of the curriculum is not yet incisive. This is rightly something you plan to do further work on during the coming school year.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Checks on the suitability of the adults coming in to contact with children are sound. You and staff know the pupils well and are vigilant to any sign they may be at risk. Pupils facing difficulties are well supported. Leaders and staff receive helpful training, which enables them carry out their safeguarding duties effectively. Governors check that all is in order. You make suitable use of the local social services support phone line, to help decide whether to pass any concerns raised about a child to external agencies. Work with an educational psychologist helps the school identify and meet the needs of any pupil suffering emotional distress.

Pupils are clear that the school is a safe place and they are cared for well. Parents and staff agree. The curriculum provides a suitable range of opportunities for pupils to learn to stay safe. You have tightened the school's approach to e-safety, making sure a clear, understood policy is in place. Regular e-safety bulletins for parents alert them to new dangers emerging on social media that might pose a risk to their children. You have recently bought a comprehensive e-safety education programme. This will form a key part of the school's curriculum in the autumn.

### **Inspection findings**

- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. In the last two years most pupils had made strong progress by the end of each key stage. Nevertheless, on taking up post, you quickly recognised that teaching in these subjects needed some further development to ensure that pupils' progress across year groups became consistently high. You are well on the way to achieving this.
- Teaching in English and mathematics now has a much sharper focus on deepening pupils' learning. Teachers have a clear understanding of the specific next steps pupils need to make. Helpful dialogue between staff and pupils contributes well to improving achievement.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop reasoning and solve problems are now a routine part of mathematics lessons. This is helping stretch pupils' mathematical understanding. We agreed that increased opportunities for pupils to tackle more sophisticated problems and justify their approach could help them learn even better.
- Pupils' learning in other subjects suitably supports their development of writing. Where appropriate, pupils have useful opportunities to apply and develop mathematical skills as part of topic work.
- Teaching in other subjects has improved notably. Teaching in science now has a better balance between developing scientific knowledge and developing investigative skills. Pupils are increasingly skilled in writing in a scientific manner. 'Outdoor learning' sessions,

introduced last January, have strengthened the curriculum, providing stimulating opportunities for pupils to learn about the world around them. This has also contributed well to learning in science and in other subjects such as geography.

- The school's drive to improve opportunities for writing in other subjects had, in the recent past, led to too much focus on English skills at the expense of those other subjects. For example, teachers' advice to pupils about how to improve their history work typically focused entirely on how to improve the writing style. Teaching did not pay enough attention to ensuring that pupils' writing displayed understanding of historical facts and ideas. In recent months, you have successfully turned your attention to resolving this issue. Pupils' writing is now more consistently fit for purpose.
- Your success in spreading and developing leadership across the school is playing a crucial part in moving the school forward. Teachers with responsibility for leading English, mathematics and science have flourished under your guidance.
- You have tightened self-evaluation and accountability at all levels. An improved approach to assessing pupils' achievement and checking the quality of teaching is in place. More frequent structured conversations with teachers about pupils' progress have created a sharper focus on helping pupils achieve as well as possible. These changes have quickened the pace of improvement. Leaders have a clearer understanding of what is working well and where the school can improve even further. Governors have increasingly helpful information about the school's performance. As a result, they can ask more challenging questions and ensure that the support and resources needed to gain improvements are in place.
- Understandably, you have not yet had the time needed to gain a completely incisive understanding of the quality of the entire curriculum. You and governors recognise that gaining this consistently deep understanding will play a crucial role in moving the school to outstanding. The improvements you have overseen since taking up post leave you well placed to achieve this.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they have the deep understanding of the quality of the entire curriculum needed to make sure it becomes highly effective.

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

Yours sincerely

Diana Choulerton  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you at the start of the day. We discussed leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness and agreed the key areas we would focus on during the inspection. During the day, I held further discussions with you. I met with six members of the governing body, including the chair and two vice-chairs. I also spoke with staff, pupils and parents and met the leader of English. You and I visited three lessons. We also scrutinised a selection of pupils' work from across the curriculum. I took account of 10 staff survey responses and 41 responses to the pupil survey. I also took account of 30 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 29 free-text responses. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' checks on pupils' progress, and safeguarding records, policies and procedures.