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Mr Christopher Grey
Headteacher
Great and Little Shelford CofE (Aided) Primary School
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Dear Mr Grey

Short inspection of Great and Little Shelford CofE (Aided) Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 18 October 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.

Since you took over as headteacher in September 2018, you have got to know the school quickly. You have identified those things the school does well and highlighted aspects that need to be improved. You have upheld the school's ethos as a caring school at the heart of the community with strong links to your parish churches. You have maintained a close-knit working ethos between your staff, and ensure that pupils feel safe and nurtured at school. This ensures that pupils like coming to school and, consequently, attendance remains high. Parents and carers say how much they value the caring atmosphere sustained within Great and Little Shelford CofE (Aided) Primary School. In particular, one parent praised the school's 'focus on the well-being of all their pupils'.

As a consequence of recent staff changes, a number of your middle leaders are new to their leadership roles. You have, nevertheless, wasted no time in supporting them to embrace their responsibilities. For example, you have taken part in an analysis of mathematics with the new subject leader to make sure that pupils' progress in this subject remains strong.

You have begun to build an effective working relationship with your governing body. You have demonstrated from the start that you can keep governors well informed with accurate analysis which, in turn, enables them to hold you and your leadership

team to account for the quality of education. You have identified priorities for school improvement and agreed these with governors and staff. This means that staff changes, and your own recent appointment, have not led to any reduction in the school's drive to maintain and improve the quality of education that your pupils receive.

During the course of the inspection, I visited every classroom in the school and had further discussions with some teachers. As a result, I was able to experience the strong commitment across the whole school to setting high expectations for pupils and working to support them to meet, and sometimes exceed, those expectations. Staff and pupils take learning seriously and, consequently, pupils make good progress. Recent staff changes have meant that the school has not yet established rigorous systems to enable the very best teaching practice to be shared more widely.

Pupils behave well in school. In class, pupils are attentive to their teachers and enthusiastic in their work. Pupils work well together and remain committed to the tasks they have been given, even when not directly supervised by a member of staff. Pupils play happily together at breaktimes and lunchtime and understand what to do if they need help. Pupils spoke highly of the support they receive from their fellow pupils in their role as 'peer mediators'.

The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire were positive about the school. They emphasised how happy their children are and praised the quality of education they receive. One parent reflected the typical view, commenting on the 'aspirational, encouraging and engaging teaching' the school offers.

Outcomes for pupils at the end of each key stage are almost always as good as, or better than, those of pupils of the same age nationally. The school's accurate internal assessment systems help teachers and leaders to identify any groups where pupils' progress is too slow, often leading to timely remedial action. This applies to the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, a few subject leaders who are new to their roles are not yet familiar with how they can use assessment information to help all pupils make strong progress in their subject area.

Safeguarding is effective.

The newly appointed safeguarding lead and his deputy make sure that staff and governors are well trained in what they need to do to keep pupils safe. The designated safeguarding lead responds to any concerns that arise from children who might be suffering from abuse. Additionally, the designated lead makes sure that safer recruitment procedures are robust. He keeps an accurate single central record of all the pre-appointment checks that have been carried out on staff and volunteers. Record-keeping is thorough and the school works effectively with outside agencies to secure support and guidance for pupils and their families.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry investigated how the teaching of phonics has improved since the previous inspection. All children in Reception and key stage 1 receive phonics sessions every morning, with additional sessions at the end of the school day. This gives teachers an opportunity to address misconceptions arising earlier in the day.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to practise recognising and using the phonemes they have learned. Pupils in Year 2 use these skills to write sophisticated sentences that are correctly constructed and that include pupils' recently acquired phonics knowledge. Consequently, pupils successfully read and spell words of increasing complexity throughout the early years and key stage 1, enabling them to make good progress in reading. Leaders identify that there are occasional inconsistencies in the method and quality of phonics teaching in different year groups. This does sometimes lead to variations in the progress that pupils make.
- My second line of enquiry considered how leadership of all subjects ensures that pupils make good progress across a rich and challenging curriculum. My scrutiny of planning, the work in books and discussions with pupils and teachers show that pupils benefit from a broad curriculum that builds their knowledge and skills across a range of subjects. Furthermore, the curriculum challenges pupils to be thoughtful about what they are learning.
- Parents understand and value the school's curriculum. One parent commented: 'The... curriculum my child engages in promotes deeper conceptual understanding as well as... skills in reading, writing and numeracy.' Pupils also said they value their broader curriculum, often involving visitors to school or visits outside school, such as the recent Year 6 visit to Ely Cathedral to commemorate the centenary of the Armistice of 1918.
- Leaders are aware that subject leaders new to their current role have not yet had time to ensure that their analysis of their newly acquired subject responsibility is sufficiently insightful and accurate. Consequently, any necessary improvements arising from the analysis are still in the process of being implemented.
- My third line of enquiry asked how the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics in key stage 2 ensures that all pupils make good progress in this subject. I found that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics in the school is strong. This is because pupils have a good understanding of the fundamental mathematical skills expected of their age group and apply these skills well. Teachers expect pupils to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to problems that require mathematical investigation and thoughtfulness. As a result, it is normal practice for pupils to experiment with mathematical ideas and to enjoy discussing them with each other.
- Pupils are eloquent in explaining their mathematical reasoning, for example how their familiarity with multiplication tables helps them to order fractions with different denominators. Pupils demonstrate that they can identify their own misconceptions and reflect on their mistakes to correct their work. These

effective learning habits have been well developed and, as a result, pupils make consistently good progress in mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in Reception and key stage 1, good practice is shared in order to improve the quality and consistency of phonics teaching
- new subject leaders develop their leadership so they are able to ensure that pupils throughout the school are making the progress they are capable of across the wider curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Hopkins
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with you and members of your leadership team, as well as subject leaders, teachers and governors. I met with a group of pupils and spoke individually to other pupils and staff around the school. We visited all classrooms together, where we observed pupils' learning, and I looked at a wide range of pupils' work from a variety of age groups and subjects. I scrutinised a wide range of documents, including the school improvement plan, curriculum plans and governing body minutes. I evaluated safeguarding referrals and child protection records, including school policies where relevant. Additionally, I examined the school's single central record and looked at the school's website. I took into account 59 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including 54 free-text comments from parents. I also considered 15 responses to the staff questionnaire.