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Mrs Cilla James  
Headteacher  
Clearwell Church of England Primary School  
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Dear Mrs James

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

Following my visit to the school on 11 December 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 April 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You took up your post of headteacher in September 2017 following a period of considerable turbulence in the leadership of the school. Staff, governors and the community recognise that you have brought the skills, experience and commitment needed to restore the effectiveness of the school following this lengthy period of uncertainty.

On taking up your position, you promptly identified that significant aspects of the school's work needed to be improved to secure a good quality of education. In particular, you have widened pupils' opportunities for learning across a full curriculum. Pupils now gain knowledge through stimulating topics such as their recent learning about the Ancient Greek civilisation. The pupils showed their deepening understanding through interesting displays of work and through presenting a production for parents. Parents value the wider opportunities for their children. One parent expressed views typical of others by saying, 'There is a massive focus on community involvement, engaging school trips and outdoor learning that are so important.'

At the previous inspection leaders were asked to develop pupils' motivation, interest and presentation in mathematics. Pupils were seen to engage well with their mathematics lessons and their workbooks are well presented, with tasks set out neatly to support accuracy. Leaders were also asked to ensure that all leaders took account of pupils' progress, for example when making judgements about the

effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum. You have recently strengthened the way you track the progress of individual pupils and can now demonstrate strengths and identify where improvements need to be made. Currently, you are supporting leaders and teachers in fully understanding the range of requirements of the current curriculum for English and mathematics. This focus has not been in place long enough to raise pupils' attainment fully.

Following accurate self-evaluation you provided teachers with extra guidance on the teaching of phonic skills. Last year, as a result of the subsequently improved teaching, every child in Year 1 reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check. Equally, standards in reading, particularly in key stage 2, are now strong. A significant proportion of key stage 2 pupils last year reached the higher standard in reading and all made good progress. You have continued to develop pupils' interest in reading with exciting displays of high-quality children's literature throughout the school. Your current school development plan has a focus on further improving achievement so that the most able pupils can reach the higher standard, including in writing and mathematics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have established strong policies and procedures that keep pupils safe. For example, leaders ensure that staff are able to contact a designated leader for safeguarding in another school should the school's own leaders not be available. Staff are vigilant to ensure pupils' safety and use the new, improved systems to record concerns that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Leaders make prompt referrals to other agencies so that families are able to access support. Governors keep safeguarding under review and meet regularly with leaders to discuss recent actions. All checks on adults working with pupils are carried out and recorded meticulously.

Pupils value the way they are taught how to keep themselves safe, including regular fire drills and advice about using the internet. Pupils feel safe in the school and have confidence in staff and their friends. They see the school as a welcoming place for all pupils. One pupil described the school's inclusive approach by saying, 'You will fit in here, no matter what.' They say that almost all pupils behave well and that if they do not follow expectations, then it is challenged and dealt with. A small number of parents indicated on Parent View that they feel the school does not deal with bullying effectively. This is not the view of staff or the pupils. Inspection activities showed that allegations are fully investigated, and the actions taken are in line with the school's policy and values.

### **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection I reviewed the school's effectiveness in helping pupils reach the higher standards in writing and mathematics. As part of this enquiry I took account of the progress that pupils make in key stage 1. This was because attainment at the end of Year 2 has been low in recent years. I also reviewed the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Overall levels of attendance have been low in the past and so I reviewed the effectiveness of actions taken to improve this.

- The number of pupils in each cohort varies considerably and very small numbers mean that analysis of assessment information for trends is not always relevant. Nonetheless, since the current curriculum has been in place, pupils have not reached the higher standard in writing. Improved teaching of writing is now promoting stronger achievement in key stage 2. Topics for writing such as their recent 'quest stories', created around myths and legends they have read, engage pupils' interest. Pupils now plan and edit their writing more effectively. This is deepening the quality and maturity of their work and as a result more pupils across the key stage are exhibiting some features of the higher standard of writing.
- In key stage 1, pupils also have interesting topics to write about and can create a story and recount events. However, scrutiny of pupils' work showed that some lack the technical skills of writing to make the planned tasks achievable for them. For example, some pupils lacked the stamina and handwriting fluency to complete their leaflets of information. Although the school has introduced cursive writing, not all pupils in the key stage have mastered this successfully. The more able pupils have the understanding to complete the more challenging tasks, and express themselves well. However, their spelling and punctuation skills are not consistently accurate enough for them to reach the higher standard.
- The teaching of mathematics has been developed well through high-quality training for leaders and teachers. In key stage 1, pupils are gaining good knowledge of number facts and skills of calculation. In class, they are confident in the use of the materials the school provides in order to deepen pupils' mathematical concepts. The workbooks of Year 2 pupils show that they are given opportunities to apply their calculation to solving word problems. They are making good progress in explaining their reasoning at an age-appropriate level. The breadth of the curriculum is supporting pupils in working towards the higher standard at the end of Year 2.
- In key stage 2 pupils are given extensive opportunities to develop their fluency in number facts and multiplication tables. Workbooks show that they have deepened their understanding of place value this year. Currently, however, their workbooks do not show that pupils have acquired the wide range of calculation skills expected of them, particularly those for Years 5 and 6. There are insufficient opportunities for them to practise the application of their knowledge of calculation to solving problems in ways which align to the current curriculum. There is limited evidence that pupils are acquiring skills to reach the higher standard.
- The proportion of pupils in the school with SEND is much higher than usually found. Leaders and governors are assiduous in overseeing the progress being made by this group of pupils. Currently, pupils are making strong progress in reading in response to extra teaching. Pupils' mathematics books show that, because of the additional support they are receiving, most are working at a level in line with the rest of the class. In writing, pupils are improving their phonic knowledge and spelling. However, leaders are currently reviewing the progress

pupils are making overall in writing to ensure that the additional teaching is effective.

- Attendance was higher last year than the previous year. This year it is rising again. A relatively high proportion of pupils join and leave the school at times other than the usual time, skewing the overall rate of attendance. Currently the number of pupils not attending regularly without good reason is very low. Pupils who have had high rates of absence in the past have responded to strengthened support and have improved their attendance over last year and this.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the curriculum for mathematics is developed further so that pupils in key stage 2 are taught the calculation and mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills needed to reach and exceed the standards expected for their age
- teachers enable pupils to improve their handwriting, spelling and punctuation skills in key stage 1.

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

Yours sincerely

Wendy Marriott  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I held discussions with you and with other members of staff. I met with three governors and a representative of the local authority. I spoke both formally and informally with pupils at times throughout the school day. I also took account of pupils' views of the school through the 12 responses to the pupil online survey. I looked at school improvement planning, assessment records and the school's self-evaluation. I made visits to classes, where I observed learning. I looked at samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding records and held discussions about safeguarding with staff. In addition, I spoke to parents at the start of the school day and considered the 15 responses to Parent View, one email and the six comments. I gathered the views of staff through reviewing the five responses to the online staff survey.