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17 January 2019

Mr Spencer Allen  
Headteacher  
Chiseldon Primary & Nursery School  
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Chiseldon  
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Dear Mr Allen

### **Short inspection of Chiseldon Primary & Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 January 2019, 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 November 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since the previous inspection, the school has had several changes to staff. This has contributed to how some parents and carers view the school's effectiveness. Some staff have secured promotions in neighbouring schools, something you and the governing body are proud of. However, you currently have too much responsibility placed on your shoulders; this limits your effectiveness as you are not able to ensure that standards across the school and all subject areas are consistently high. You eagerly await the arrival of a new deputy head. You are also training middle leaders, so that they can fulfil their responsibilities.

In recent years, the school has celebrated strong pupil attainment and progress, for example when the Minister for Schools recognised the school's strong mathematics results in 2016, where 100% of pupils in Year 6 met the standards expected for their age. In 2018, the school's writing progress was positive, putting the school in the top 10% of schools nationally. However, pupils' attainment in reading was low; this impacted on the proportion of Year 6 pupils who met the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined.

The school has also grown in size, taking on an additional Nursery approximately seven miles from the main site. The early years provision is currently made up of

two Nursery provisions and a single Reception class. You recognise that there is a substantial amount of work to do to ensure that standards across the early years provision are consistently high, and work is in its early stages to secure this. You have two new leaders who look forward to the challenge ahead to achieve these aims.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have made sure that recruitment checks are robust, and these checks ensure that you only appoint staff who are suitable to work with children. While these checks are completed, the recording of these checks on the school's single central record has lacked rigour. As a result, amendments to the single central record were required during the course of the inspection to ensure that it is compliant.

Once staff begin their roles, they undertake a thorough induction and also access regular training. This training provides staff with useful updates as well as reminding them of your expectations of safeguarding practice. Staff carry out their roles well. They record any concerns they have about children's welfare with the necessary detail so that leaders can make informed decisions about whether external support is required. You check these concerns as soon as they come to you, and record-keeping shows that you act proportionately to these concerns.

You have completed the local authority's self-audit, and actions have been taken to maintain the school's effective safeguarding culture.

### **Inspection findings**

- First, I considered how the teaching of reading enables pupils, particularly middle-attaining pupils, across key stage 2 to make strong progress from their starting points. In recent years, middle-attaining pupils have made less progress than their peers. This has resulted in the proportion of middle-attaining pupils working at expectations for their age by the end of Year 6 being below national averages in 2017 and 2018. As a result, you prioritised improving this aspect of your work.
- You recognised the need to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding about the books they have read, capitalising on the existing positive attitudes that pupils had toward reading. Through the 'book talk' approach, pupils regularly read high-quality books by widely renowned authors. Books such as 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone' and 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' form part of the pupils' reading diet. Pupils delve into these quality texts with enthusiasm. Teachers skilfully probe pupils' knowledge and understanding through their use of effective questioning and prompts. Consequently, pupils answer increasingly difficult questions about the book they are reading with confidence.
- Pupils also read frequently out of school. You have promoted the importance of reading through the '30 read' scheme, rewarding pupils when they have hit this milestone. Pupils' reading journals show that pupils read a range of quality texts at home, often reading books from start to finish. This is because the books they

read capture and sustain their interest.

- Current middle-attaining pupils are making strong progress from their starting points. Pupils are building successfully on their prior knowledge. Some pupils are moving on even further still and are now working at the higher standard.
- Second, I considered how the school's curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to increase their understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling and how accurately they apply these to their writing. Since 2016, the proportions of pupils working at expectations for their age and the higher standard in grammar, punctuation and spelling have been lower than national averages by the end of key stage 2. Until recently, pupils were taught about these aspects of their writing in separate lessons to writing lessons. You felt that pupils were not using the correct grammar, punctuation and spelling in their writing, so you decided that pupils should learn about these features in their main literacy lesson.
- Despite this, pupils' books show that pupils are not yet accurately applying punctuation and grammar in their writing. Pupils make basic errors which demonstrate a lack of understanding, particularly around concepts that form part of the national curriculum for their age group. This limits the effectiveness of their writing. In some cases, pupils' writing can be particularly difficult to read, including poor grammar and a lack of punctuation. This is because pupils' knowledge of age-appropriate punctuation and grammar is underdeveloped.
- Pupils have plenty of opportunities to write across a range of subjects. You decided that pupils should record all their writing in one book; part of this decision was to ensure that pupils work with consistently high quality in all subjects. While pupils' presentation and handwriting are consistent, pupils' spelling is particularly weak. Younger pupils are not applying their phonic knowledge when spelling a range of words. Older pupils' spelling is more accurate, but is still not secure. Pupils are finding it difficult to spell both unfamiliar words and those that they should already be able to confidently spell in their year group.
- Finally, I considered how leaders ensure that the quality of the early years is consistently strong across the Reception class and the two Nursery settings, of which one is located away from the main school site. The school took on an additional Nursery premises after the previous inspection, which has been run by the school for two years. In addition, the school-based Nursery has only recently opened in a new building. You have two new leaders in post. They are enthusiastic about securing improvements across the early years provision, but they have only just started this work.
- Across the early years settings, there is too much variability in the quality of education. While leaders have ensured that the early years statutory checks are complete, the work to promote children's progress across the early years is underdeveloped.
- It is not consistently clear what approach staff follow to teach children how to read. In classrooms, phonics resources are not displayed or readily available to aid children when they are attempting to spell words that are unfamiliar. It is not wholly clear what leaders' or teachers' expectations are in phonics for children, but it is clear that for some children, their phonics knowledge is not

sufficiently developed, with some children unable to accurately write their own name.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is greater consistency in the quality of education across the early years
- they raise the profile and quality of phonics across the early years provision
- pupils apply spelling, punctuation and grammar with greater accuracy in their writing
- they continue to grow further capacity across senior and middle leadership, closely monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and improving standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Nathan Kemp  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I spoke to you, representatives of the governing body and a representative from Swindon local authority.

Together, you and I made visits to lessons. I also spoke with you about your work to improve pupils' reading. In addition, you provided assessment information to demonstrate current pupils' progress. I scrutinised the work in pupils' writing books and their reading journals. Furthermore, I met with you to discuss safeguarding procedures and the work you do to promote a strong safeguarding culture and how you maintain pupils' safety. I scrutinised various safeguarding records, including those relating to the suitability of staff to work with children.

I looked at a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's self-evaluation, and discussed the school's current improvement priorities; these are presented in the school's 'APE' document. I took account of 52 responses to the Parent View online survey.