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Miss Kerry Collins
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Collins

Short inspection of East Hanningfield Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 March 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 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.

There is a strong sense of moral purpose in the school, underpinned by its core values of friendship, respect, courage, excellence, determination, equality and inspiration. These are shared by all stakeholders. Since the previous inspection, you have continued to drive a strong team that is committed to providing the best quality of education for all pupils. Consequently, the areas for improvement identified at that time have been appropriately addressed. Staff appreciate the support they receive and the opportunities provided to develop their practice, many of which come through close work with six church schools in the area.

East Hanningfield is friendly and welcoming. During the inspection, pupils were celebrating World Book Day. All staff and pupils were dressed as characters from favourite books and it was clear that pupils were excited about and enjoying their learning. Pupils in the mixed Year 5 and Year 6 class spoke enthusiastically about the stories that they were writing for younger pupils. Other pupils that I spoke with told me that they like the fact that teachers plan interesting activities for them. They also enjoy the opportunities they have to take on additional responsibilities, such as being play leaders and members of the sports crew. Pupils learn in spacious accommodation, both indoors and outside, and enjoy additional resources such as a nature area and a swimming pool.

Pupils are polite, articulate, confident and well mannered. They listen to each other and collaborate very well. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent and their attitudes to learning are consistently good. Pupils think that behaviour in school is good, and parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree with this. There have been no serious incidents of misbehaviour recorded by the school for some time.

Pupils enjoy the many extra-curricular experiences that broaden their learning. Educational visits take place each term, together with themed weeks. Visits from specialists also help to ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to experience a diverse range of cultures, music, dance and art within the curriculum. Pupils I spoke with talked enthusiastically about these experiences.

Parents speak highly of the school. Many of those I spoke with, or who provided written responses to Parent View, spoke about the hard-working approachable staff, the good progress their children make and how much their children enjoy coming to school. One parent reflected the views of many by stating:

'My children have been at the school now for two years and I cannot praise the school and the teachers enough. The staff here have been amazing towards me and my children, and my children have progressed very well since starting at the school.'

Governors are capable and committed. Together with leaders, they undertake regular checks on the school's provision. They all know what the school does well and have a realistic view of aspects that need further improvement. The school's evaluation is accurate and future plans include appropriate actions to ensure that the school remains good.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

The promotion of effective safeguarding has a high profile throughout the school. Staff receive regular and appropriate training so that they are well informed about all aspects of safeguarding procedures. Consequently, they know what actions to take if they have any concerns relating to pupils' safety and welfare.

Leaders have put in place thorough procedures to ensure the safe recruitment of new staff. Governors check regularly to ensure that safeguarding procedures are rigorous and everyone understands them. Pupils say that they feel well cared for and looked after in school, and parents agree that this is the case.

Inspection findings

- Other than safeguarding, I identified three lines of enquiry to explore to determine that the school remains good. First, I considered how well the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning ensure that all groups of

pupils make good progress. Published assessment information shows that some groups of pupils did not make good progress from the end of key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2 in 2018. Additionally, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined at the end of key stage 2 dipped from the previous two years.

- We discussed this cohort. You identified that some pupils had particular needs which affected their progress in mathematics and, consequently, their attainment in this subject at the end key stage 2.
- Together, we looked at the work in pupils' books in all year groups and particularly in Year 6. It is evident that pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and across the curriculum from the start of the year. In-school assessments, which are checked for accuracy with other schools, also indicate that progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school is good. This evidence overall supports the school's view that the proportion of pupils who reach and exceed age-related expectations is likely to rise at the end of key stage 2 next year. Similarly, the work we saw in the early years and in key stage 1 provides evidence for continued strong outcomes at the end of these stages.
- I next considered how well the school has addressed the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. These included ensuring that tasks in lessons are challenging enough for all pupils, improving handwriting and presentation, and ensuring that pupils have regular opportunities to write in subjects other than English.
- In the books we scrutinised, we could see that appropriate challenges are being set to ensure that all pupils, including those who are most able, can achieve well. They have opportunities to discuss and mark each other's work and this helps them to improve. Pupils have clear targets and can check these against their 'learning ladders', which detail the progress they should be making. Overall, there is evidence that pupils across the school are being appropriately challenged. This is ensuring that they make good progress.
- Since the previous inspection, all staff have raised their expectations for the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation. Pupils have regular opportunities to practise their handwriting in specific books. Leaders are also ensuring that pupils are taught to join their handwriting sooner and that the skills for a strong and correct pencil grip are developed appropriately in the early years. Although most pupils are presenting their work neatly and taking pride in this, there is still room for improvement. Not enough pupils are consistently joining their letters in key stage 1 and there are a few who are not consistently joining letters in Year 6. Additionally, a few pupils in both key stage 1 and key stage 2 are inconsistent in the quality of their handwriting across different subjects.
- Leaders have developed a curriculum, based on topics, which incorporates learning across a range of subjects. This not only provides interesting and engaging learning activities that develop pupils' knowledge and skills well, but also provides greater opportunities for them to write in subjects other than English. As we looked at books, we could see that pupils are producing good-quality writing within their topic work, as well as within English, and that the

wider curriculum is providing a good purpose for writing. For example, prior to the inspection, pupils across the school experienced a technology week. This included a visit from an engineer who inspired pupils to design inventions. They produced good-quality written work about this experience.

- My final line of enquiry was to evaluate how well the school ensures that all pupils attend regularly. This is because published information regarding attendance indicated that, since the previous inspection, the attendance of some groups of pupils has been low. The school checks attendance regularly and assiduously. Early contact is made with parents when the school has a concern over attendance. The school provides appropriate support for any families who need help to ensure that their children attend regularly. The importance of good attendance is flagged regularly and celebrated in assemblies. A very few pupils have not been able to attend regularly for medical reasons. Overall, the school does all it can to ensure that all pupils attend regularly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans to further improve the presentation of pupils' work are swiftly and fully implemented in order to ensure that pupils consistently present their work neatly across all subjects and year groups
- initiatives to ensure that pupils join their handwriting from an early age are embedded so that more pupils are doing so by the end of Year 2 and all are doing so by the end of Year 6 in order to ensure that more pupils exceed age-related expectations in writing at the end of both key stages.

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

Yours sincerely

Joan Beale
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held discussions with you about the key lines of enquiry for this inspection, the school's self-evaluation of its performance, plans for future improvement and information about current pupils' progress and attainment. I scrutinised a range of sources of information, including reports from external consultants. Additionally, I met with subject leaders for English and mathematics and seven governors, including the chair of the governing body.

You and I visited all classrooms together. I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work in a range of subjects and spoke with pupils informally. I also met with a group of pupils more formally to talk about their experiences at school.

I looked at the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures, including systems for safe recruitment of staff, and, additionally, considered information relating to attendance.

I gathered the views of parents through 19 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and their responses using the free-text service. I took account of the school's own parental survey. I also spoke with some parents when they were delivering their children to school.