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Ms Suzanne Corry  
Headteacher  
The Dasset CofE Primary School  
Fenny Compton  
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Dear Ms Corry

### **Short inspection of The Dasset CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 April 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.

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.**

The school has experienced considerable upheaval following the departure of the previous headteacher last summer. Reductions in the school roll also led to financial pressures. Staff morale fell, and pupils' behaviour deteriorated. Opportunities for staff to benefit from training have been limited. Since you took up your post in January, you have brought stability. You have secured the confidence of the school community, and made some wise decisions. You prioritised setting consistent expectations for pupils' conduct, rewarding good behaviour and making sure that everyone understood the school's rules.

As a result, pupils' behaviour in class and in the playground has improved greatly over a short period. During the inspection, pupils played happily at social times, and told me that this was the norm. Across the school, they were generally attentive in their lessons, and keen to answer questions. When they spoke with me, older pupils demonstrated a mature understanding of their learning and an appreciation of the recent improvements. Pupils' attendance is above the most recent national average.

Pupils have respect for cultures other than their own, recalling well their learning in religious education about a number of faiths. Older pupils believe they are well prepared for secondary school. They commented on how their teachers had progressively developed their ability to make decisions on how to approach their own work.

Leaders have not fully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Key stage 2 pupils achieved well in writing in 2018. However, teachers across the school do not have a secure knowledge and consistent approach to teaching writing effectively.

A clear division exists between standards in upper key stage 2, and those in the younger years. Our observations and work scrutiny showed that for older pupils, teachers have a detailed knowledge of what pupils know and understand. They use this information to plan work that extends pupils' learning. Teachers' questions probe and develop pupils' understanding effectively. Pupils present their work consistently well. We saw work of a high standard in English, mathematics, science and history. At key stage 1, some pupils' work is a little untidy. Teachers do not build so carefully on what pupils can already do.

The pattern of current pupils' attainment is similar to that seen in recent published outcomes. In 2018, key stage 2 pupils left the school with attainment in reading, writing, mathematics and science at or above the national average. At key stage 1, the proportions of pupils attaining at the expected standard and at greater depth were largely below those seen nationally.

The majority of parents and carers think highly of the school. They appreciate in particular the enthusiasm their children have for learning, and the caring attitudes of staff. Some parents have been concerned by the extent of the staffing changes and inconsistent communication.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a well-established culture of safeguarding in the school. Although some details of the policy require updating, leaders have made sure that staff are thoroughly trained to identify any problems that pupils may face. Records show that staff are vigilant, and report any signs that pupils may not be safe. On the rare occasion that the need arises, leaders work together with other agencies that safeguard children. Leaders make appropriate checks on adults working in school.

Pupils told me that they feel entirely safe. Those that I spoke with said that bullying occurred only rarely if at all, and they had confidence that an adult would be able to resolve any issue promptly. Pupils were able to recall in very good detail the advice that they have received on how to stay safe online. They spoke of learning about road safety and fire safety.

### **Inspection findings**

- The written self-evaluation you presented for the inspection was overgenerous. However, it showed that you have a good understanding of the school and the priorities for improvement. You have drawn up a development plan that identifies a set of relevant actions to address the school's current weaknesses. During our discussions you were realistic and insightful. You proved to be an astute observer of the learning that we saw during the inspection. You are therefore well placed to continue to effect the changes that the school requires.

- Governors are aware of the need to pick up the momentum that was sadly lost in the latter part of 2018. Officers of the local authority have provided an accurate evaluation of the work of the school and drawn up plans for its longer-term support. However, those responsible for the oversight of the school have much work to do to ensure that you and other leaders in the school have the capacity and resources that you need to achieve your aims.
- Children in the early years and key stage 1 pupils do not develop writing skills quickly and reliably. Staff have given insufficient consideration to pupils' transition between the first two key stages. Work scrutiny showed that teachers do not plan carefully writing tasks that help pupils to build on the skills that they already have. Pupils do not complete sufficient longer pieces of writing to enable them to embed the individual skills that they have learned.
- Pupils and parents told me how much pupils enjoyed the breadth of the curriculum and the imaginative stimuli that engage their interest. For example, Year 6 pupils told me with excitement of their research into the skulls of early species of humans and a letter they had written to the British Museum about an exhibition of Mayan culture. Their work shows a well-developed knowledge and understanding associated with each subject. Pupils enjoy art, music and physical education. They take part in a good range of extra-curricular activities. Older pupils have the opportunity of a residential visit to an outdoor activity centre.
- You have begun to consider how to adapt the curriculum so that pupils benefit from greater coherence and progression. You intend this to be a concerted effort from well-informed teachers, with each acting as a lead for one or more subjects. Currently, class teachers plan work in foundation subjects without detailed regard to what pupils already know and understand.
- The proportion of pupils at the school who are disadvantaged is low, and the annual value of the pupil premium is correspondingly modest. The money has been spent on providing emotional support for some of the disadvantaged pupils, and inspection evidence shows that this has proved effective. The school has also arranged additional teaching to further their academic progress. Nevertheless, disadvantaged pupils across the school have generally attained less well than their peers. Leaders in school have not evaluated the impact of the pupil premium. Governors have not checked that this has been done, or ensured that this information is available on the school's website.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teachers in the Reception class and key stage 1 set high expectations for pupils' writing and plan teaching that allows pupils rapidly to extend and embed their writing skills
- subject leads receive the training and support that they need to contribute to the planning of a revised curriculum and to check on standards in their subject
- they evaluate the impact of the pupil premium and use the evaluation to plan future expenditure.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Spoor  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I met with you, the literacy coordinator and governors. I also held informal conversations with other members of staff. I met with the school's improvement partner representing the local authority. Together you and I observed learning in every class in the school. We scrutinised pupils' work from the current academic year. I selected a group of key stage 2 pupils and met with them to gather their views. I spoke informally with several other pupils of different ages. I talked with parents at the start of the school day. I observed pupils' behaviour at social times and when they moved around the school.

I took account of the 46 recent responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including comments made using the free-text service. I also considered the nine responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. There were too few responses to the survey for pupils to take these into account.

I scrutinised a wide range of documents including: the school's evaluation of its performance and its plans for improvement; records of governors' meetings; policies; a report on the school by a representative of the local authority; and records of pupils' attendance and behaviour. I looked in detail at records that show how the school keeps pupils safe.