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Mrs Victoria Voller
Headteacher
Shere CofE Aided Infant School
Gomshall Lane
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Dear Mrs Voller

Short inspection of Shere CofE Aided Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 3 May 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 December 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 and your team have reviewed and revised the curriculum during the past year in order to extend pupils' learning. The impact of developments in the curriculum on pupils' engagement in learning and on their enjoyment of school is clear. However, these relatively recent developments in the curriculum are not taught consistently across the school, leading to an element of variation in teaching and learning.

Pupils make strong progress and achieve increasingly well. In 2018, standards at the end of key stage 1 were well above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics, including at the higher standard. All groups of pupils achieve equally well in reading, including the most able and the small number of disadvantaged pupils. The proportion of pupils achieving greater depth in reading was more than double the national average in 2018. All pupils achieved the expected standard in science at the end of Year 2.

Pupils of all ages behave exceptionally well in lessons and throughout the school. They have great fun playing with the extensive range of playground equipment available during playtimes and enjoy catching up with their friends. Consistently high expectations and strong relationships throughout the school underpin pupils' growing confidence and their sense of security.

At the time of the previous inspection, you were asked to strengthen phonics teaching and to improve support for pupils who need extra help with their reading. You and your team have addressed these key issues for improvement in full. A well-developed and systematic approach to the teaching of phonics ensures that pupils of all abilities develop secure reading skills, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In 2018, the results of the Year 1 phonics check were in line with the national average. You were asked also to reduce unauthorised absence. Your robust, fair and consistent response to unexplained pupil absence ensures that all groups of pupils are safe, attend regularly and achieve well. You maintain strong links with parents, carers and agencies, including the education welfare officer. You listen carefully to parents' views and support those families who are experiencing difficulties sensitively and effectively.

You have strengthened school improvement plans since the previous inspection. You report progress in developing the school's work carefully and comprehensively to governors. As a result, staff and governors are clear about priorities for development and share your vision for the school's future.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team of staff and governors are vigilant about pupils' safety. You are acutely aware of your safeguarding responsibilities and maintain consistent safeguarding procedures. You monitor pupils' well-being continuously and effectively so that pupils are able to work and play safely, securely and comfortably. You make sure that staff and governors have regular opportunities to update their understanding of safeguarding issues through training and staff meetings. As a result, they are confident about what to do if they have any concerns.

Governors make sure that the school premises are maintained to a high standard, both indoors and out, and that safeguarding procedures are followed consistently. Your bursar keeps a close eye on staff recruitment checks to ensure that they are completed promptly and fully. Effective communication with parents and agencies ensures that you are fully informed about pupils' needs and able to draw on specialist advice where needed. Almost all parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, feel that their pupils are secure in school.

Inspection findings

- We focused particularly on the following areas during the inspection: the impact of recent curriculum developments on pupils' learning; the extent to which the teaching of writing ensures that all groups achieve well, particularly boys and disadvantaged pupils; and how well early years provision deepens and extends children's knowledge, including for the most able children.
- The headteacher is passionate about ensuring that the curriculum consistently stimulates, challenges and extends pupils' learning across a broad range of subjects. Since September 2018, she and her team have started the process of introducing an updated curriculum which capitalises on pupils' natural curiosity about the world more effectively than before. A refreshed approach to teaching is

already strengthening pupils' engagement and providing enlightening insights into their understanding. They are excited about learning and work industriously. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 2 tested different boat shapes while investigating floating and sinking, leading to some perceptive observations, such as, 'this shape floated best because it has more surface'.

- Developments in the curriculum ensure that the teaching captures pupils' interests increasingly well, particularly for boys. Pupils' attitudes to writing have improved as a result. All groups of pupils are keen to write and are thoughtful about their work. English teaching builds well on pupils' prior learning and is responsive to pupils' needs, including for those pupils with SEND. Pupils' work indicates that all groups make equally strong progress in writing from their different starting points, including the small number of disadvantaged pupils. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to use vocabulary and structure to write for a wide range of purposes and audiences.
- The early years leader ensures a strong focus on developing children's language skills. Words and phrases are widely displayed to support children's growing vocabulary. Adults use conversations regularly to explore and extend children's understanding and use of language. Children develop secure early writing skills by the end of Reception Year.
- Leaders have successfully focused on ensuring that the youngest children in the school benefit from the best possible start to their schooling. Skilful teaching during early years ensures that all children achieve equally well, including the most able. Children of all abilities and backgrounds are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Adults in early years have the highest expectations of children's learning and behaviour and take every opportunity to reinforce and extend children's understanding. They provide an extensive range of stimulating activities which capture children's interest and contribute to children's learning very well, including for the most able children.
- Children in early years are captivated by their experiences and engrossed in learning. For example, during the inspection a group of boys proudly explained their model of an egg launcher, enthusiastically describing how it works and pointing out the labels they had added to the different parts of the machine. Children's enthusiasm for learning during early years means that they are willing to persevere when tasks present a challenge. Children rapidly grow in confidence and self-esteem during early years. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of early years was higher than the national average in 2018. As a result, children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the revised curriculum is fully implemented and taught consistently well throughout the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education

for the Diocese of Guildford, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Surrey. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Julie Sackett
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

You and I observed learning in all classes during the inspection. I looked at pupils' work during our visits to the classrooms, as well as considering a sample of pupils' work separately. I reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and development documents, the single central register, safeguarding documents and information about pupils' progress and attendance.

During the inspection, I met with you and with five governors, including the chair of the governing body. I considered 66 views expressed by parents through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 44 free-text comments. I also spoke with staff, parents and pupils.