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Hannah Wheatcroft
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Wheatcroft

Short inspection of Farnham Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 June 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 October 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since your appointment as headteacher in September 2018, you have worked quickly to bring about necessary improvements. You and your newly formed senior leadership team know the school's strengths and weaknesses well, as seen in your accurate self-evaluation and development plans.

You are ably supported by governors and by the local authority. Both have great confidence in you and other leaders. Governors are precise in their assessments of the school's strengths and areas for development.

You have secured the trust and respect of parents and carers. All parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire would recommend the school to other parents. The vast majority say that the school is well led and managed. One parent echoed the feelings of others when saying: 'Farnham is a very special school, where every child is celebrated as an individual.'

Since the last inspection, pupils' progress has remained broadly average compared to outcomes nationally. In the early years, an above average proportion of children typically reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. Similarly, in Year 1, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check is high.

In 2018, key stage 2 outcomes in reading and writing at both the expected standard and the higher standard were consistently high, as was these pupils' attainment at the expected standard in mathematics. Key stage 2 attainment at the higher standard in mathematics was below the national level in 2018, as was key stage 1 outcomes overall. We spoke about the very small numbers of pupils in each year group and how this can have a significant impact on the results, both positively and negatively, and results therefore must be treated with caution.

Teaching and learning is effective because pupils enjoy 'fun and interesting' lessons and show positive attitudes towards their work. Pupils behave well at all times and show respect to adults and to each other.

You have correctly identified that the use of assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics (the foundation subjects) is not yet used as effectively as it could be to plan for pupils' learning needs. Also, that there is still some work to be done on improving pupils' mathematical reasoning.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff ensure a strong culture of safeguarding pupils. Frequent training ensures that staff understand and carry out their safeguarding responsibilities effectively because they know that keeping children safe is 'everybody's responsibility'. You ensure that vulnerable pupils receive appropriate support, helping them to make good progress both emotionally and academically.

The single central record meets requirements. You make careful checks on the suitability of adults applying to work at the school, including volunteers. Governors check to ensure that safeguarding documents are well maintained and meet requirements. Pupils feel safe and know how to keep safe.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry looked at how effectively leaders and governors have strengthened middle leadership and closed the gap in pupils' attainment in reading and writing. These were key areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- The recently introduced middle leadership development programme includes mentoring and coaching of staff by senior leaders. This has successfully helped leaders of English and mathematics to monitor the quality of education. The positive impact is clear in the quality of pupils' work in books and pupils' outcomes. Middle leaders of other subjects are beginning to use lesson observation and work scrutiny to tell them about the quality of provision in their subjects. These systems, including the use of assessment information, are not yet established in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- The standard of writing across the school is strong, as is pupils' neat and consistent handwriting style. Pupils write extensively in a range of subjects. For example, Years 4, 5 and 6 have written explanatory texts about the difference between the sun stone calendar of the Aztecs and our own. In Year 1, pupils

were writing about the importance of Pentecost to Christians. One Year 1 pupil wrote: 'Pentecost is a special time for Christians. It is like a birthday party for the church.'

- In 2018, attainment of key stage 2 pupils in reading and writing was above the national average at both the expected and higher standard. In 2018, key stage 1 pupils' attainment in reading and writing was broadly in line with the national figure for both reading and writing at the expected and higher standard.
- My second line of enquiry explored how effectively leaders keep children safe, particularly when using the internet or digital technology. This was because internet safety information was not available on the school's website.
- The e-safety policy effectively guides staff and pupils on how to keep safe when using digital technology with appropriate rules. Staff, pupils and parents understand the 'acceptable use agreements', making users aware of the school's e-safety guidelines and how to keep safe online. An example is the 'stop, think before you click rules', such as 'I will only delete my own files.'
- Pupils say that assemblies, safer internet week and their computing curriculum teach them how to stay safe online. Almost all parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children feel safe, and all staff strongly agree that pupils are safe at this school. Leaders ensure that e-safety has a high profile and is effective.
- Another line of enquiry was whether leaders and governors have maintained the excellent levels of attendance and behaviour at the school. You have effective systems to monitor attendance and absence. The half-termly senior leader attendance meetings help to identify any vulnerable pupils. Your work with parents helps them to help their children to attend more often. Pupils' attendance is high compared to the national average, both historically and for current pupils.
- You have effective systems to help maintain pupils' excellent behaviour. For example, any behaviour incidents, which are rare, are logged and swiftly followed up with pupils and parents. Repeat incidents are extremely rare. This shows that the support you provide effectively promotes and sustains excellent behaviour. There have been no exclusions in the past five years.
- My final line of enquiry was to ascertain how leaders and managers are addressing the decline in pupils' progress in mathematics.
- You have identified that pupils' mathematical reasoning is not as strong as it could be and have appropriate plans to improve the situation. For example, you have recently appointed a new mathematics leader and given a higher profile to mathematical reasoning at weekly staff meetings, where staff use the agenda item to share best practice. Your actions are beginning to show improvements.
- Reception children make excellent progress in number work. For example, one child was accurately ordering numbers 0 to 100 in coloured chalk on the playground. This was as a result of the strong support from a teaching assistant who quickly responded to any misconceptions by using appropriate mathematical resources to swiftly rectify the child's mistakes. The use of mathematical resources to deepen pupils' conceptual understanding was not as consistent in Years 2 to 6, as noted in our joint observation of teaching and accompanying

joint work scrutiny.

- The governing body knows that pupils' reasoning about mathematics is a key area for development and members are keenly aware of the effective development plans that are beginning to improve this. Governors are highly effective in holding leaders to account for the actions on these plans.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' mathematical reasoning is further developed by using appropriate mathematical resources that deepen pupils' conceptual understanding across the school
- assessment and monitoring systems in subjects other than English and mathematics become fully established and teachers use them effectively to check on pupils' progress.

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

Stephen Cloke
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held discussions with you and the deputy headteacher about the progress made since the previous inspection. We considered my key lines of enquiry and reviewed child protection procedures. I also discussed with you the effectiveness of pupil premium spending. I noted your evaluations of the quality of education and plans for improvement and I reviewed the school's e-safety documentation.

I looked at minutes of governing body meetings and spoke to three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I met with a representative from the local authority.

I observed pupils at play during lunchtime and met with a group of pupils from Years 1 to 6 to talk about their learning and other experiences at school.

I took account of the 18 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the 19 free-text responses from parents and the nine responses to the staff questionnaire.