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Mr Vince Southcott
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Southcott

Short inspection of Nailsworth Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 October 2017, 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

Your strong, principled leadership provides clear direction for the school. The appointments of the deputy headteacher and the leader of the early years have strengthened the capacity of the leadership team to improve the school. You are adept at developing the skills of your staff. Consequently, staff feel trusted and they take on new responsibilities readily. Many are involved in professional training programmes or collaborative work with other schools.

You set a good example for pupils. For example, pupils' behaviour has improved over the last year because you have taken firm action to establish high expectations. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is in line with the national average. At the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils who attain at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined is far higher than the national average. You are passionate about promoting pupils' health and mental well-being alongside their academic success. This is apparent across the school, including the food provided at lunchtime. Pupils appreciate the rich variety of lunchtime and after-school clubs. The school choir, for example, is very popular. The 'song of our time' drama production last year was a highlight for many pupils.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to develop mathematics teaching and to help teachers share good practice. You have successfully addressed these areas for improvement. Mathematics teaching in key stage 2 meets the needs of pupils with different abilities and offers them opportunities to apply their learning to solve problems. Pupils' progress in mathematics in key stage 2 has been well above average for the last two years. Most of the current teachers joined the school since the previous inspection. Your commitment to develop their professional skills by sharing good practice is now a strength of the school.

Pupils' progress in mathematics in key stage 1 is not as strong as in key stage 2, particularly for the most able pupils. Pupils' achievements were better last year, but you recognise there is scope for further improvement. Pupils make good progress in reading and writing. In particular, pupils' progress in reading in key stage 2 was well above average last year. However, disadvantaged pupils are not as confident in writing and so they made less progress than other pupils nationally. Pupils' rate of attendance is average overall. However, in the past, too many pupils have been persistently absent from school. Your actions to address this by building stronger links with parents have paid off. Several pupils who previously found it difficult to attend school regularly now have better rates of attendance.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. You manage the arrangements for making sure that pupils are safe very well. In your role as designated safeguarding lead, you communicate effectively with other agencies. You work well with other school leaders to identify any emerging risks in your local area. All policies and practice meet the latest statutory requirements.

Pupils receive and understand advice about staying safe in different situations. These include, for example, the risks associated with using social media websites or mobile phones. Pupils know who they can speak to in school if they have any concerns or worries. Bullying incidents are rare, but pupils are confident that when they do happen they are dealt with well by teachers. Pupils feel safe in school and their parents agree. The vast majority of parents believe their child is happy, feels safe and is well looked after at school.

You keep a close eye on pupils who are vulnerable in any way. You make sure that all staff are alert to any potential issues. They know that safeguarding pupils is everyone's responsibility. Consequently, there is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school.

Inspection findings

- A new chair of the governing body was appointed two years ago. Governors work with diligence and skill to hold school leaders to account closely for the performance of the school. Senior leaders' reports to governors are now suitably detailed. They provide an accurate evaluation of the progress of different groups

of pupils. As a result, governors have a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

- To decide if the school remained good, the first line of enquiry focused on the progress made by key stage 1 pupils in mathematics. Few pupils attained at a greater depth in mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2016. Teachers have ensured that pupils' calculation skills have been improved through greater practice. Teachers model the skills pupils need to succeed. In 2017, a higher proportion of pupils attained a greater depth of understanding. The proportion is rising towards, but has not yet equalled, the national average. Middle leaders have introduced new methods and resources for teaching mathematics in key stage 1. Some teachers are not yet confident in the new approaches, especially when questioning pupils about their reasoning.
- Another key line of enquiry evaluated the progress of disadvantaged pupils in reading and writing. Key stage 2 pupils' progress in both reading and writing was in line with the national average in 2016. Senior leaders are ambitious for pupils. They responded to this average performance by focusing teachers' attention on specific key skills for pupils to master. Pupils', including disadvantaged pupils', progress in reading improved significantly as a result. In 2017, pupils' progress in reading was well above the national average. Pupils' writing skills have also improved. Typically, they enjoy writing, for example composing spirited letters of complaint to an imaginary hotel during the inspection. However, disadvantaged pupils' writing skills still lag behind other pupils nationally. Some disadvantaged pupils' weak spelling, and poor handwriting, hold back the quality of their writing.
- A third key line of enquiry considered the rates of pupils' attendance. Senior leaders have recognised the need to improve attendance. Last year, they appointed a family liaison worker. Pupils who experience social and emotional problems are now given extra support. Innovative approaches to communicating with parents have been successfully introduced. These efforts to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent have been effective. The rate of persistent absence for current pupils is now lower than last year.
- A final line of enquiry looked at the development of middle leadership. Since the previous inspection, many new teachers have joined the school. A period of change to staffing has coincided with a period of major change to the curriculum and methods of assessment nationally. Senior leaders have given more responsibility to middle leaders for developing the curriculum and checking on the effectiveness of teaching. Middle leaders are rising to the challenge well. They are using a new system for monitoring pupils' progress. Senior leaders recognise that this system needs developing further to sharpen its effectiveness.
- Parents are very happy with the quality of education the school provides for their children. They respect the senior leaders and the staff. The vast majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to others. One parent's comment was typical of many, 'I have been very impressed with the supportive, calm, child-centred and nurturing teachers and staff at the school.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers' questioning in key stage 1 mathematics is developed further
- disadvantaged pupils' spelling improves in key stage 2
- middle leaders' use of assessment information to monitor pupils' progress is further refined.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the chair of the governing body and one other governor, middle leaders and senior leaders. I held a telephone conversation with a school adviser who has worked with you in recent years. I held a meeting with eight pupils from Years 5 and 6 and spoke with many other pupils informally at break and lunchtime. I made observations of learning across the school jointly with senior leaders. I looked at several examples of pupils' work and spoke with pupils during lessons. I scrutinised a variety of documents, including the school's own evaluation of its performance, the headteacher's report to governors, records of checks leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children and information relating to attendance. I took account of responses to questionnaires from 25 pupils and five staff. I also considered 63 responses from parents to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View.