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Mrs Karlaine Gilbert
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Dear Mrs Gilbert

Short inspection of East Meon CofE Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 January 2016, 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 2010.

This school continues to be good.

You have maintained a good quality of education for your pupils since the last inspection. You, your staff and governors are clearly committed to providing a happy atmosphere where pupils can learn in an 'inclusive, caring, safe and stimulating environment'. I saw this quotation, from the school's website, manifested in everyone's work throughout the day. Pupils learn in a happy, calm, friendly atmosphere. The analysis of questionnaires completed by pupils and parents shows a high degree of satisfaction with your school and the education it provides. Staff questionnaires were also highly positive. Staff are fully supportive of the direction you set for your school. They appreciate that they have your support if they want to try out new approaches or take calculated risks to benefit the pupils. Clearly, everyone pulls together to help pupils enjoy school and do well.

You have tackled the areas for improvement from the last inspection successfully. Pupils know what they are meant to do in lessons and can explain this reasonably well. The only time when this falls down is when the pupils do not understand some of the professional terminology that the teachers use. The school's policy for marking pupils' work and involving pupils in reviewing how well they have done is implemented with a good degree of consistency.

Pupils make good progress in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. Although pupils' attainment in tests and assessments tends to fluctuate in your small school, which is inevitable, you analyse the results carefully and can explain convincingly what causes any dip, or rise, in attainment. Attendance has improved

since the last inspection. You have made good headway in developing a way of tracking individual pupils' progress, to align with the government's recent changes to the curriculum and assessment arrangements. You and your governors know how important it is that pupils make good progress from when they start school. The number of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is extremely small in your school, so much so that it is not possible to draw valid conclusions as to how well these pupils achieve as a group.

Teachers plan interesting topics for pupils to enliven their learning. Older pupils talked with infectious enthusiasm when they recalled their visit to Kew Gardens, as part of their rainforest topic, and they were equally motivated by the current Second World War theme. Staff lead the way in modelling and fostering good relationships. Teachers and learning support assistants support pupils' learning effectively, setting the tone for working hard and drawing pupils into discussions through sensitive, well-phrased questions. In this way, adults ensure a positive atmosphere for learning and pupils work hard. Pupils' questionnaires showed that what I observed was consistent with usual practice. A high proportion said that teachers listen to what they have to say, help them to 'do their best' and make sure everyone understands.

Safeguarding is effective.

During my visit, I asked staff with varying roles and experience to explain the school's procedures for safeguarding pupils and checked if they knew what to do should they ever become concerned for a child's safety. Without exception, the procedures were well known, showing that your regular training sessions with staff have been correctly focused and had the desired impact.

My focus on safeguarding was important because the school's written policy and procedures were not entirely up to date. Despite this, your training for staff did reflect the latest guidance. In addition, the governor with responsibility for safeguarding has had recent training, as part of joint training with another school in your cluster. There is a clear emphasis on the part of leaders, staff and governors on keeping children safe. Recruitment checks and records are kept in accordance with the government's guidance. The slip-up in terms of your policy document and procedures is an oversight rather than being indicative of any shortcomings in keeping children safe from harm. On the contrary, pupils' safety is clearly a high priority for all. Questionnaires show pupils' and parents' confidence that this is the case.

Inspection findings

- Your determination to provide a good education for the pupils at East Meon came through strongly during my visit. The parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and those who wrote comments, sent in letters or emails, or spoke to me personally had nothing but praise for your leadership and the quality of education their children receive at East Meon.
- Your governors share this commitment to your school. They provide good support as well as the healthy degree of challenge required of all governing bodies. In answering some wide-ranging questions, governors showed good

knowledge of the school's work while being mindful that their role was very much a strategic one.

- The Chair of Governors keeps in close touch with you to find out for himself about various aspects of the school's work. Performance management is taken seriously yet clearly viewed as a supportive process to make sure the school's good effectiveness is sustained.
- During our visits to classrooms to observe learning, you identified accurate strengths and areas for development when evaluating pupils' learning. You quickly identified questions you wanted to follow up. When meeting two pupils to talk to them about their work and look at their books, you asked pertinent questions to unpick their learning and check their understanding. These, and other, activities showed me your evaluation of teaching and learning is accurate and robust.
- You have rightly identified that pupils' achievement in writing is not as good as it is in reading and mathematics. As you know, some pupils' spelling and/or handwriting is not as secure as it could be. In addition, pupils do not always have enough opportunity to write longer pieces of work. They are given a list of features or techniques at the beginning of the lesson that they need to include in their writing. However, some pupils who are capable of more extended writing tend to stop when they have covered the list rather than carrying on and showing how well they can write.
- Throughout my visit, I met pupils who were polite, caring and friendly. They showed interest in what they were learning and knew what they were expected to achieve. In assembly, pupils listened intently and hands shot up enthusiastically whenever they were asked a question or invited to participate in other ways through, for example, contributing to prayer.
- We saw children in the early years responding well to adults' encouraging approach and efforts to engage them in conversation. Children were persevering when reading labels, using their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make to work out words. This shows that children get a good grounding in early reading skills. As in other lessons, you picked up aspects of learning that were emerging as less effective. These were positive signs. When you monitor teaching, you identify questions and points for development that are helpful for teachers in promoting their professional development.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the documentation relating to safeguarding children is amended to reflect the latest government guidance and approved by the governing body
- pupils are given enough opportunities to write at more length, if capable of doing so, whether in literacy lessons or other subjects
- pupils whose spelling is not as good as it should be and those whose handwriting is untidy or poorly formed are supported to improve.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Portsmouth, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Dickinson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, seven members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair, and the literacy leader. I held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority. You and I visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning. Together, we looked at samples of pupils' writing in different subjects and I observed you talking to a small group of pupils about their written work. I talked to four members of staff, separately, to probe the school's procedures for safeguarding children and examined a range of documentation and records associated with safeguarding. I asked parents in the playground for their views on the school, attended an assembly, spoke to pupils informally and analysed the inspection questionnaires and parents' written comments.