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Mrs Julia Dowding  
Headteacher  
Mitcheldean Endowed Primary School  
Hawker Hill  
Mitcheldean  
Gloucestershire  
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Dear Mrs Dowding

### **Short inspection of Mitcheldean Endowed Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 June 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 March 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school's motto, 'achieve, believe, contribute', is borne out in all aspects of school life.

The strong leadership of leaders at all levels, including governors, at this securely good and improving school enables continual improvement and refinement to the school's work. As a result, the school does not stand still and any relative weaknesses are addressed quickly. There is no room for complacency. You are a determined and effective leader with a drive for excellence in all aspects of school life. You also provide mentoring and advisory support to other schools and enable effective teaching to be shared within the locality.

Pupils' outcomes have been consistently high at the end of key stage 2 over a number of years, demonstrating that pupils' achievement is good.

You are proud of the wide contributions pupils make to the community through their charity and enterprise work. Pupils show a sense of pride in the part they play in making the school the best it can be. Pupils spoken to on inspection said they 'enjoy every minute'.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to increase the level of challenge in the tasks set for all pupils. Your work on this has been particularly effective in

mathematics. The school's strategy to 'do it, twist it, solve it' is embedded across the school. As a result, pupils relish the challenges set for them and solve mathematical problems with confidence.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders responsible for safeguarding are diligent in making timely referrals and actively engage with external agencies to minimise children's risk of harm.

The work of leaders, the family support worker and the special educational needs coordinator ensure that vulnerable pupils' emotional, social and academic needs are well catered for.

Staff have completed all the appropriate training, in line with current legislation, and apply this training to their daily work effectively. Safeguarding records are fit for purpose.

The e-safety committee undertakes considerable work to ensure that pupils and parents are particularly well informed about the risks when going online. The curriculum work on this aspect is explicit and of high quality. As a result, pupils feel safe and know what to do if they have concerns.

### **Inspection findings**

To ascertain that the school remained good, a key line of enquiry was about how effective the teaching is for middle-attaining and high-attaining pupils in mathematics. Pupils' outcomes in mathematics in 2016 were above the national average. However, published assessment information in 2016 suggested some variance in pupils' progress from their starting points in key stages 1 and 2.

- Leaders' strategies to improve the teaching in mathematics even further over the last 18 months have been very effective. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Their teaching fully incorporates all aspects of the national curriculum and therefore provides ample challenge for pupils to apply their understanding to solve mathematical problems. Pupils of all abilities, including those who are disadvantaged, make good and sometimes rapid progress. You accurately identify that, very occasionally, pupils do not move on to 'twist it and solve it' problems quickly enough, which means that the middle-attaining pupils do not have maximum exposure to the most challenging work. Nevertheless, leaders' actions have improved teaching of mathematics markedly. A greater proportion of pupils across the school now exceed the standards that are expected for their age, including in the early years.

Another aspect I looked at was how well leaders have ensured that teachers' assessments in grammar, punctuation and spelling are aligned with their current assessments of writing, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, middle-attaining pupils and the most able. This is because the proportion of pupils meeting the expected

standard in writing was considerably higher than the proportion of these pupils that met the required standard in grammar, punctuation and spelling at the end of key stage 2 in in 2016.

- Current pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making good progress in writing. They are able to use and apply their knowledge and understanding of grammar and punctuation in English well. Occasionally, spelling patterns are not sufficiently embedded for a few pupils. However, the school's work to provide additional support in key stage 1 for those pupils who find phonics and spelling more difficult is working; these pupils catch up quickly. In key stage 2, pupils use teachers' feedback effectively to make improvements to their work and this results in well-organised and good-quality writing.
- The middle-attaining and most able pupils make good progress overall; however, they could be challenged even further. Some middle- and high-attaining pupils do not consistently apply the full range of their writing skills in subjects other than English. For example, in history some pupils are not encouraged to apply their understanding of historical evidence in their writing. This restricts pupils from making rapid and sustained progress over time in their writing in upper key stage 2.

My final line of enquiry was about how well pupils attend the school so that their opportunity to make good progress is fully maximised. School performance information indicates that pupils' absence is above the national average and attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs are too low.

- There are robust systems in place to monitor pupils' attendance. Governors hold leaders to account firmly for pupils' attendance through their regular visits and meetings. School documentation confirms that leaders are 'going the extra mile' to support pupils to attend well. Leaders' determined actions, and the work of the family support worker and of external agencies are bringing about gradual improvement. However, a few pupils do not attend regularly enough and attendance rates for these pupils remain stubbornly low.
- Some families take holiday in term time and this has an impact on the overall attendance rates across the school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- ensure pupils make rapid and sustained progress by applying their full range of writing skills in subjects other than English, particularly history and in upper key stage 2
- ensure that rates of attendance improve swiftly to at least the national average for all groups of pupils.

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

Julie Carrington

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I spoke to you, senior and middle leaders, and a group of governors. I had telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority and an external school improvement adviser. I made visits to lessons to observe pupils' attitudes to learning and to scrutinise their work. I talked with a group of pupils to gather their views of the school.

I considered a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's self-evaluation, development plans, school performance information, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding documentation.

In addition, I took account of 42 responses to Ofsted's Parent View online survey, and free-text messaging service. I gathered the views of staff throughout the online questionnaire and through discussions during the inspection.