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Mrs Corinne Martin  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Martin

### **Short inspection of Chalford Hill Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 30 January 2018, 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 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As headteacher, you provide ambitious and determined leadership. You and your leaders share an uncompromising drive for excellence to ensure that all pupils receive the best possible education in a safe and nurturing environment. The governing body provides good-quality support and rigorous challenge. This has helped you set the right direction for the school. You have forged a strong and committed staff team whose members share your commitment to improving learning. They are highly motivated to continue developing their effectiveness for the benefit of pupils. Consequently, outcomes are increasingly above average by the end of Year 6, preparing pupils well for the next stage of their education.

In response to the recommendation in the previous inspection, you have reorganised your leadership team. Leaders now work together more effectively to share ideas and best practice. They check teaching regularly and use this information to provide further support and challenge for colleagues. Together you have introduced new approaches to strengthen teaching, particularly in mathematics. The focus on developing pupils' ability to reason and solve problems is leading to higher standards. However, you acknowledge that this work to ensure that pupils' thinking is stretched to the full is not yet completely embedded.

You identified that not enough pupils were able to read and interpret challenging texts to a high standard in the end-of-Year 6 tests. Teachers now focus on systematically developing the more complex skills of reading. This is having a good impact, as pupils are able to talk confidently about their reading at a deeper level. You also identified that, while standards in writing were above national figures in both key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2017, mistakes in

basic spelling and punctuation often limit achievement. The new approach to teaching phonics and spelling is enabling younger pupils to make rapid progress in their writing. Across the school, pupils are able to write at length in interesting and engaging ways, using a rich vocabulary. Nevertheless, you are aware that there is more to do to ensure that pupils eliminate unnecessary errors in their writing.

Parents and carers are extremely positive about the work of the school. They praise the rich and varied curriculum the school offers, especially the focus on learning outdoors whenever possible. They say that their children are happy and 'blossoming', because staff build the children's resilience and self-confidence with initiatives such as the 'super learners' certificates. Pupils confirm that lessons are 'interesting and fun', which means that they are keen to learn and they behave well.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The culture of safeguarding is strong, because you, your staff and governors give the safety and welfare of pupils the highest priority. This has been particularly important during the extensive building project that is currently being undertaken. Parents praise the way that school leaders have maintained their children's safety on the school site and the good level of communication each week about progress with the building works.

All staff and governors receive the appropriate training to identify possible signs of risk and harm. Records show that staff are up to date in their training, including on guidance in recognising the dangers of extremism and terrorism. You ensure that thorough vetting procedures are followed for all staff and volunteers who work at the school. The governor responsible for safeguarding regularly checks that the school's single central record is maintained accurately. Governors also check that staff understand how to report any concerns promptly.

You work with other agencies effectively, making timely referrals when the need arises. Records are of good quality. Most pupils attend well and are seldom late for school. However, you are swift to consult the education welfare service should attendance give cause for concern. Your curriculum helps pupils understand potential risks to their safety, including online risks. Pupils report that there is very little bullying or poor behaviour. They are adamant that the school is a safe and friendly place. Parents acknowledge the lengths to which staff go to provide a welcoming and inclusive school where every child is valued.

### **Inspection findings**

- During the inspection, I met with you to discuss the school's progress since the previous inspection. We agreed the following lines of enquiry: how well key stage 2 pupils, including middle-attaining pupils, are challenged in reading and mathematics; how successfully leaders have accelerated progress in writing across the school; and how well the school keeps pupils safe.
- The majority of pupils in key stage 2 achieved the expected standard for their age in reading in 2017. However, you are aware that progress in reading could be stronger in order to raise achievement still further. To this end, you ensure that teachers are developing pupils' comprehension skills more extensively. During the inspection, we saw

the positive impact of this work. For example, in Year 6, pupils were challenging each other effectively by devising high-quality questions about a text in science. The reading club and the reading 'passports' encourage pupils, especially boys, to experience a wider range of literature. Across the school, pupils are able to discuss their reading knowledgeably, showing a clear understanding of the way authors use language to create effect. Consequently, a greater number of pupils are on track to achieve and exceed the expected standard for their age by the end of this year.

- Progress in mathematics in key stage 2 was broadly average last year. To increase progress rates, you have implemented a new teaching approach to ensure greater levels of challenge. Following extensive training, teachers plan effectively to promote pupils' fluency in calculation and their understanding of mathematical concepts. Pupils enjoy the 'prove it' and 'show me' challenges that develop their reasoning skills well. The work in pupils' books shows that, increasingly, teachers present pupils with problems that require deeper thinking in order to solve them. However, while the most able pupils are confident in applying their reasoning skills, you acknowledge that not all pupils are able to do this yet.
- During my visit, we looked at a range of writing from across the school. We agreed that, since the start of the year, pupils write at greater length with good standards of presentation and legible handwriting. They are able to write coherently for a variety of purposes, such as in the Year 4 pupils' biographies of famous inventors, which required a formal style. Pupils use their imaginations well to create characters and atmosphere in their stories. For example, in their stories about being haunted, Year 6 pupils used sophisticated vocabulary to enhance the feeling of suspense. Pupils are skilful in editing and revising their work to make improvements, which is leading to rising standards across the school. Nevertheless, sometimes their writing is let down by mistakes in common spellings and missing punctuation.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers continue to develop pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics to deepen understanding
- writing continues to improve, particularly in spelling and punctuation, to enable pupils to reach the highest standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Sandra Woodman  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and discussed the school's self-evaluation, information about pupils' progress and improvements since the previous inspection. Together, we observed learning in classrooms and looked at a range of pupils' work in books. I listened to several pupils from key stage 2 reading and met with pupils to talk about their experience of school life. I held meetings with middle leaders and with three governors. In addition, I spoke with an external adviser who supports the school. I looked at a range of written evidence, including documents relating to safeguarding and attendance information. I took account of the written comments of 66 parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, and the views of parents who spoke to me before the start of the school day. I also took account of the views of 14 members of staff and the 47 pupils who returned the online questionnaires.