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Mr Mike Riches
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Riches

Short inspection of Iron Acton Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 March 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 January 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

Since you began in post just over two years ago, you have established yourself as a well-respected leader. You have forged excellent partnerships with parents and know your pupils and their families well. Many parents speak highly of you and welcome your presence at the school gate each day. They typically comment that you are approachable, know every pupil by name and resolve any issues quickly. Other comments include, 'We feel very lucky to be part of this lovely school' and, 'The school is amazing...we are so glad that we chose it for our children.'

Your concerted actions are raising standards of teaching and building a strong team of staff, subject leaders and governors. Pupils enjoy school, have good relationships with adults and are keen to achieve well. As a result, they demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. Your accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses helps you to draw up appropriate development plans. Effective delegation of responsibilities ensures that everyone is accountable for school improvement. Staff are motivated and proud to be part of the school, because they feel well supported and respected. Governors are skilled and have a very clear understanding of the school's main priorities. Their full commitment to working collaboratively and monitoring the work of the school is supporting school improvement effectively. They ask searching questions to assure themselves that your actions are having sufficient impact.

As a result of improvements to teaching, pupils consistently achieve well at the end of the early years and in the Year 1 phonics screening test. Strong teaching in all subjects at key stage 2 has led to further improvements in outcomes over time. Consequently, the proportion of pupils who achieve expected and higher standards in Year 6 is consistently above, or in line with, that of all pupils nationally. Considerable improvements to teaching in all subjects at key stage 1 last year led to much higher proportions of pupils reaching expected and higher standards at the end of Year 2 than previously. These figures were higher than for pupils nationally. Effective teaching ensures that almost all current pupils make steady progress, with approximately one quarter making good or better progress. You recognise that it will be crucial to develop further and to sustain highly effective teaching in all subjects. This will help you to ensure that pupils make consistently strong progress and reach the highest standards.

Safeguarding is effective.

You create a caring and supportive environment for pupils, which helps them to feel safe and well looked after. Adults form positive relationships with pupils and, as a result, pupils know who to go to if they have any worries. You ensure that all staff and governors undertake relevant training and provide updates, which ensure that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. You maintain secure records of any concerns and routinely follow these up with outside agencies if necessary. You regularly review your actions to check that they are making a difference and you use the expertise of a governor with experience in child protection to ensure that safeguarding is robust.

Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They say that behaviour is mostly good and that bullying is rare. They confidently explain that adults quickly sort out issues when pupils' behaviour falls short of the school's expectations. Pupils have a good understanding of cyber bullying and realise that it is important not to reveal personal information when using the internet.

The school maintains meticulous records of the checks you carry out to ensure that all staff are safe to work with children. Teachers carry out risk assessments to ensure that pupils are safe on trips. Several staff are trained to administer first aid and there are well-known evacuation procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe in the event of an emergency.

Inspection findings

- We agreed that my first line of enquiry would be to establish how well the school has addressed the recommendations of the last inspection in relation to improving teaching in mathematics. My second line of enquiry involved checking how well you are sustaining the recent improvements in outcomes in all subjects at key stage 1. Since you came to the school, you have improved teaching considerably. As a result, a high proportion of pupils reach expected standards in all subjects at the end of each key stage. Approximately one fifth to one third of pupils achieve higher standards. Pupils feel well supported by adults in the school

and typically comment, 'Every teacher is really kind and supports you to learn well.'

- Current pupils' work reveals that teachers have high expectations of pupils and provide work that routinely challenges them. This motivates pupils and helps them to apply their prior learning to consolidate and extend their skills. For example, Reception children enjoy using large dominoes and chalk to create number sentences on the playground and pupils in other classes work purposefully to find factors, estimate and check calculations and practise counting in fives. Teaching assistants are well deployed and adults model tasks well. Pupils are very keen to learn and they listen intently, which ensures that they understand what to do. Adults ask probing questions, which helps them to assess pupils' understanding and clarify any misconceptions.
- Improved teaching is helping pupils to develop fluency in mathematics and apply their calculation skills to reason and solve problems. Pupils show a good understanding of what they are learning, can explain their thinking and accurately record their calculations. Subject leaders have a good understanding of how well pupils are achieving because they routinely undertake a range of activities to monitor pupils' progress. This helps them to intervene swiftly when pupils need additional support. Your latest assessment information, reviews of pupils' learning and discussions with pupils confirm that almost all pupils are making steady progress in all subjects. Approximately one quarter of pupils are making better progress than this. However, occasionally some pupils successfully complete tasks quickly and a few pupils confirm that they find learning easy. This restricts them from making stronger progress.
- Another line of enquiry explored how well teaching helps disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities to make strong progress. This is because, over time, progress and attainment for these pupils have been too variable when compared with other pupils. You have effectively utilised the skills and expertise of the recently appointed special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), who is helping you to develop personalised learning plans to support pupils who need extra help. The school's most recent assessment information and pupils' learning reveal that effective teaching results in almost all pupils making steady progress. Additional targeted support has resulted in striking progress for a few pupils who have fallen behind in their learning. For example, one or two pupils made the equivalent of one year's progress in the autumn term 2017. However, you have accurately identified that several pupils, some of whom have complex needs, are still working at standards well below those expected for their age. You are aware that these pupils will require sharply focused additional support to accelerate their progress in order to help them to catch up.
- My final line of enquiry was to check how effectively leaders, including governors, fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities, particularly in respect of ensuring that pupils attend school regularly. You have taken decisive action to tackle higher absence, which is paying dividends and ensuring higher levels of attendance. Close communication with parents and carers and rewards such as the 'be there badger' mascot have had a positive impact. Pupils are motivated to attend regularly and consequently good levels of attendance are sustained.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- targeted teaching support improves progress for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities who are falling behind in their learning, so that they catch up rapidly
- sustained improvements to teaching ensure that all pupils make consistently strong progress in all subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Beeks
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I had meetings with you, subject leaders and the SENCo. I also met with six members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and had a telephone conversation with your school improvement adviser. I reviewed your latest assessment information, the school's own self-evaluation and school development plan, safeguarding records and attendance information. Together we observed learning in mathematics in most classes and I reviewed pupils' workbooks in several classes. I observed breakfast club and met with parents at the start of the school day. I had several informal discussions with pupils during break and lunchtime and in lessons. I also held a separate meeting with a group of pupils from Years 1 to Year 6 to gain their views and I heard pupils read. I took account of 26 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and many additional free-text comments. I also reviewed six responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.