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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Wendy Evans
Head of School
Chittlehampton Church of England Primary School
The Square
Chittlehampton
Umberleigh
Devon
EX37 9QW

Dear Mrs Evans

Short inspection of Chittlehampton Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 April 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Staffing has been stable, which you state has been important, particularly as you have made changes to the school's curriculum in light of changes to the national curriculum in 2014. The school has also benefited from its close work with neighbouring schools in the federated trust.

You lead a smaller-than-average primary school with fewer than 40 pupils on the roll, serving the local community and, in some cases, beyond. Pupils' behaviour is a strength: they hold meaningful conversations with their peers and adults and consider each other's viewpoints. Pupils have an extremely mature attitude to school and value how the size of the school has benefited them, particularly in building positive relationships. As one pupil stated: 'They (staff) take advantage of the fact that it is a small school. We get more attention and are treated as individuals.' These views reflect the opinions of pupils across the school.

You, leaders and governors have an accurate overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You have focused your attention on maintaining strong standards across the school as well as developing teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics, with the aim of increasing the number of pupils who are working at a higher standard. This focus is based on accurate monitoring, which has correctly pinpointed areas for improvement across the school. Furthermore, you and your leaders have prioritised developing spelling, punctuation and grammar. Governors speak knowledgably about the school's performance and they are well versed in

how leaders' actions relate to improvement priorities. You, leaders and governors work closely together, further strengthening your actions.

Due to the small size of the school, classes are organised into mixed-aged classrooms. Despite the wide age range in these classes, teachers and support staff use the national curriculum effectively to ensure that pupils learn well. In addition, teachers deploy support staff effectively and provide quality learning experiences for pupils. Teachers design activities well, and this has resulted in pupils making strong progress across the curriculum. The number of pupils working at expectations for their age is sustained across the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils are safe at the school. A thorough recruitment process ensures that only those suitable to work with children are employed. Leaders achieve this through members of the interview panel being trained in safer recruitment as well as providing opportunities to discuss the potential candidate's understanding of safeguarding. Once individuals are employed, leaders record this information effectively on the school's single central register and individual staff files. Leaders and governors frequently monitor these and ensure that they are up to date and maintained to a high standard. Once staff are appointed, they undertake a thorough induction process which ensures that they are well placed to work within the school's safeguarding expectations.

When concerns arise about pupils' welfare, leaders' actions are proportionate to the severity of the concern. They engage with external support and can demonstrate how, through these actions, potential risk has been minimised or eradicated. Across the school, adults supervise pupils well, both in the school and off site. This is particularly pertinent as pupils have their school lunches at the local village hall. Once more, staff identify potential risks and steps are in place to maintain pupils' welfare. Staff across the school are trained in first aid, and, in the early years, paediatric first-aid training is in place.

Inspection findings

- Teachers have worked together to ensure that the curriculum meets pupils' needs and, where possible, links are made between subjects to further enhance the curriculum. An example of this can be seen in key stage 1, in the theme of 'The Seaside', which is relevant given the school's geographical location. Pupils have opportunities to: read 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch'; consider natural and manmade features of seaside locations in geography; create seascapes in art; and explore similarities and differences of seaside holiday destinations in history. During the inspection, it was clear that pupils enjoyed this particular theme.
- As pupils move into key stage 2, this level of conscientious curriculum design continues. Pupils speak confidently about what they have been learning in science and could provide facts about keeping healthy through a rich and varied diet, as well as the key functions of organs. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about

what they have learned and could apply it to their own lives, evaluating school lunches and considering how they meet the aims of a balanced diet.

Furthermore, leaders have embraced the teaching of 'mindfulness' across key stage 2 in an attempt to nurture and promote pupils' mental well-being. Leaders have been encouraged by how pupils have responded positively to these opportunities.

- In response to mixed-age classes, leaders have ensured that, through a 'rolling curriculum', pupils have access to a wide and varied curriculum and avoid covering key concepts more than once. The only time that pupils revisit a curriculum area is when they are taught about e-safety. This is because teachers acknowledge the rise in the popularity of the internet and social media and the need to equip pupils with the knowledge necessary to stay safe when online.
- Next, we considered how teaching, learning and assessment promote pupils' progress in writing and mathematics. Analysing current pupils' progress, it is clear that pupils make strong progress, achieving expectations for their age as they move through the school. In order to find out more about pupils' progress, we looked at pupils' books. When looking at pupils' mathematics books, it is highly evident that pupils have covered the mathematics curriculum widely. Pupils develop a range of skills, in line with the national curriculum expectations. While pupils have opportunities to become fluent with concepts, there is a need for greater consistency when providing activities which promote reasoning and problem-solving skills. Leaders acknowledge that, while efforts are being made to enhance these skills, they are still in their infancy and not yet fully embedded.
- Next, we looked at pupils' writing books. In some cases, pupils' writing is extremely well developed and to a high standard, which has resulted in these pupils achieving greater depth. However, teachers' expectations vary across year groups, so that some pupils do not apply effective spelling strategies when writing. In most books we looked at, there were spelling errors which restricted stronger progress in writing.
- Finally, we considered how reading is promoted across key stage 2 and the impact this has on pupils' outcomes. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes towards reading. They speak enthusiastically about books they have read and, through a rich reading diet, they experience reading books by a range of authors. Such is pupils' interest in reading, they share reading experiences with their peers, which often influences their next book choice. When we looked at pupils' reading records, it was clear that pupils value reading opportunities, reading regularly both at home and at school and finishing books that they have started.
- Leaders have promoted reading across the school effectively. Teachers' passion for reading has worked its magic on pupils. Events such as the 'Readathon' have had an impact on two fronts: first, to promote reading; and, second, to raise pupils' awareness about charities and events across the world. Through money raised during the 'Readathon', pupils have supported a young boy in Haiti. This ongoing commitment has resulted in repeated reading events over a number of years. Further actions to promote reading across key stage 2 include the school's 'Bookworms' initiative, which rewards regular reading and is popular among pupils. Also, recently the school celebrated its 150 years by recognising the most

popular children's books across that time. These included J.R.R Tolkien's 'The Hobbit', C.S Lewis's 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' and Anna Sewell's 'Black Beauty'. As a result of these actions, the proportion of pupils working at expectations for their age is higher in reading than in other subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils apply correct spelling more consistently in their writing
- the approach to mathematics is embedded so that pupils have regular opportunities to develop reasoning and problem-solving skills, resulting in more pupils working at the higher standard.

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

Yours sincerely

Nathan Kemp

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and the executive headteacher to discuss the school's performance since the last inspection, as well as current performance and the school's improvement plan. We observed lessons together and looked at a sample of pupils' workbooks. I spoke with members of the school's governing body. I also met with a group of key stage 2 pupils to discuss their attitudes towards learning, reading opportunities and their preparedness for secondary school.

I met with you and the executive headteacher to discuss safeguarding across the school and scrutinised various safeguarding records. These included logs of concerns about pupils, records relating to the suitability of staff to work with children and information about staff induction and training opportunities. Furthermore, we discussed how leaders respond when concerns about pupils' welfare emerge. I considered the school's safeguarding audit and subsequent actions. I also took account of 27 responses to the pupil survey, 13 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and six responses to Ofsted's Parent View online survey