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Miss Kirsty Howarth
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Dear Miss Howarth

Short inspection of Newchurch Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 November 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have worked very effectively with the head of school to build upon the many strengths that inspectors found. The federation with Nettlestone Primary School was newly formed at the time of the previous inspection. Since then it has flourished and now strongly supports the quality of education by sharing staff expertise.

The school provides an attractive environment that celebrates and supports pupils' learning through interesting displays and events. Pupils relate well to each other and are polite, confident and proud of their school and its achievements. Consequently, their attendance is better than in most schools nationally. The parent community enthusiastically supports the school's work. Parents appreciate the positive way in which their children's needs are met. Parents and pupils alike praise the many opportunities the school provides, such as the wide range of sports and other outdoor activities. Almost every parent who completed the online survey, Parent View, said they would recommend Newchurch Primary School to others. Typical of many parents was one who wrote: 'The "can do" attitude the school promotes is evident in every aspect of school life, from the classroom to the sports field.'

You have followed up the actions from the school's previous inspection with determination, implementing strategies to deepen pupils' thinking and learning across the different subjects of the curriculum. Inspectors asked you to improve the

quality of teaching by ensuring that learning activities meet the needs of pupils with different abilities, including the most able pupils. As a result of leaders' efforts, key stage 2 standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics have improved. In 2018, a higher proportion of pupils attained the standard expected by the end of Year 6 than in other schools nationally. Rates of progress were well above the national average in reading, and each one of the most able pupils reached the higher standard. The most able pupils did not make as much progress in writing and mathematics, and some of them attained less well than you expected. You rightly recognise there is further work to do to enhance the school's provision for this pupil group.

Following the previous inspection, you provided training opportunities to equip teaching assistants with the skills and subject knowledge to support pupils effectively within the classroom. More recently, you have made effective use of the input of local authority advisers to improve teaching and learning in English and mathematics. As a result, pupils think carefully about how to approach mathematical problems and they are becoming more articulate in explaining their reasoning. Teachers are making clear links between reading and writing so that pupils make good use of their reading skills to help improve their writing. Interesting events and topics provide pupils with the motivation to write for real purposes and audiences. Your middle, or 'phase', leaders, who take responsibility for a whole or part key stage, support their colleagues with strategies that help pupils achieve success across the different subjects.

Equally important to leaders is the way in which your 'mission possible' curriculum supports pupils to develop strong personal, social and emotional skills. These skills help them to maintain a positive attitude when faced with challenges. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 play an active role in the school by having responsible positions for which they apply and are formally appointed. During the day of the inspection, Year 6 skilfully coordinated and led the whole school in a service of remembrance at the village church. They say that the school is preparing them well for their futures. Their development is supported by visits and participation in events beyond the island, such as a recent overnight stay in London.

You benefit from a determined and skilful governing body that shares your ambition for the school to be the best that it can be. Since the last inspection, governors have strengthened their organisation to use their expertise and time effectively to review specific areas of the school's work. Through their regular visits, governors have become well informed about the school's work. They ask incisive questions that hold you to account.

You have developed a systematic approach to ensure that leaders at all levels of the school check that the quality of provision meets your expectations. This helps you to know the school very well. Leaders promote the school's values well, and these are firmly embedded in all classrooms. These values contribute to pupils' good attitudes to their learning. Leaders' monitoring checks, though detailed, do not sharply focus on the impact of teaching and learning on the progress of groups and individuals. Leaders need to sharpen some of their improvement actions, including the

evaluation of their monitoring, in order to increase pupils' rates of progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

Signs around the school say that safeguarding is a priority, and no one in school is in any doubt that this is the case. School staff fully understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff receive comprehensive training, and your team of designated leaders is knowledgeable about the threats in the community that are most likely to affect your pupils. Staff make decisions wisely when seeking early help for children and families. Designated leaders are diligent when following through their concerns.

Governors rigorously check that the school maintains effective procedures to determine the suitability of adults working at the school. The parent forum has worked closely with leaders and governors to develop parent-friendly safeguarding information. All parents who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, believe their child is safe at school, and pupils say they always feel safe. They were able to tell me what bullying is, although they could not recall any examples of bullying at school. They said that if there were, teachers would deal with them very quickly. The curriculum ensures that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in the community, and especially when they are online.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision. In our initial meeting, we agreed three lines of enquiry that are closely linked and are current school priorities. Our enquiries were: the actions you are taking to improve current pupils' writing; how well the school currently meets the needs of the most able pupils; and whether teachers make effective use of assessments of pupils' learning to meet individual needs.
- Teachers use the wider curriculum subjects well to develop pupils' imagination and encourage them to write. The school's current focus on the centenary of the First World War has fired pupils' interest to write with a purpose. The topic has had particular appeal for some of the boys who were typically reluctant to write.
- During our learning walk we saw Reception children concentrate intently on their learning through play. There were many opportunities to encourage writing in their well-resourced and stimulating environment. Some of the most able children were using their phonic skills to write and develop sentences for a story.
- Leaders recognise that the handwriting of some Year 2 pupils is a barrier to their fluency because it reduces their ability to practise skills fully by writing at increasing length. Teachers have recently put early support in place to enable Year 1 pupils to develop a fluent handwriting style. Parents very successfully support their children's reading, and teachers have asked them also to help with writing.
- During classroom visits and in pupils' workbooks, we saw teachers skilfully support pupils to learn and apply their skills and knowledge. For example, some very strong classroom practice in key stage 2 developed pupils' skills to edit their

work to improve its accuracy and content. However, teaching does not consistently support pupils to understand how to edit and improve their work. As a result, some of the most able pupils are not developing their writing composition skills deeply enough to be on track for the higher standard.

- Leaders make effective use of assessment information to identify gaps in teaching and learning. For example, you looked at the recent Year 6 test papers to understand why some pupils did not achieve as well as you expected in mathematics. This resulted in adaptations to the teaching and learning in earlier year groups. Current pupil-level information shows that, in order to meet the challenging targets that you have set, more pupils need to catch up in writing than in reading and mathematics.
- You have improved the quality of classroom provision by developing teachers' skills to identify the next steps in learning for each pupil. This approach enables teachers to meet the needs of pupils with different abilities, including the most able pupils. Learning activities and teaching inputs provide support and challenge that build upon what pupils have previously understood. Teachers' assessment information also helps them to decide if extra teaching is needed, beyond the classroom. We saw during our learning walk that additional support is particularly effective in reading.
- Pupils' workbooks show the good progress in writing that almost all pupils make from their starting points. Teachers know the needs of each pupil very well. Their understanding of each individual helps many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, to overcome difficulties and adopt a 'can do' attitude towards learning. Teachers carefully adapt learning activities to support the small numbers of lower-ability pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making great strides in their learning. On occasion, teaching does not provide enough opportunity for individual pupils to address earlier gaps in their learning, particularly in writing.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they improve pupils' progress in writing by:
 - embedding recent improvements so key stage 1 pupils more quickly develop fluency
 - ensuring that pupils develop the skills to edit for accuracy and content in key stage 2, so that the most able pupils, in particular, achieve the higher standard
- they use more sharply their evaluations of the impact of teaching, learning and assessment to improve pupils' outcomes still further.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda Jacobs
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the head of school and other staff with significant responsibilities. I met with four governors, including the co-chairs of the governing body. I spoke to a representative of the local authority. Your phase leaders and I discussed a sample of pupils' workbooks in English, representing pupils who have different abilities. I observed learning in all seven classes either with you or the head of school and I spoke to a number of pupils about their work. I observed pupils' play at breaktime and attended part of your school's service of remembrance in the village church.

I considered 101 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 26 written comments, and I met a number of parents at the start of the school day. I also considered an email from a parent. I took into account the views of 24 members of the school's staff who responded to the online survey, and I reviewed 83 responses to the pupil questionnaire. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and I analysed a range of school documentation, including: information about pupils' achievement; the school improvement plan; examples of leaders' monitoring of the school's effectiveness; minutes of the governing body's meetings; the single central record of recruitment checks; and safeguarding policies and procedures.