

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



1 February 2019

Mrs Deborah Burnett  
Acting Headteacher  
Fittleworth CofE Village School  
School Lane  
Fittleworth  
West Sussex  
RH20 1JB

Dear Mrs Burnett

### **Short inspection of Fittleworth CofE Village School**

Following my visit to the school on 23 January 2019, 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 December 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 risen to the challenge of leading and improving the school with energy and enthusiasm. All staff value your leadership and the professional development you have given them. They have a genuine desire for improved pupil learning in the school. Teachers and teaching assistants work hard, are skilled and get satisfaction from teaching well. This has enabled you to make very rapid changes to teaching and learning, resulting in observable improvements to the progress pupils are making throughout the school. The school staff, governors and the local authority support you well.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Parents, carers, pupils, staff and governors all agree that it is a happy place. Pupils trust and like their teachers and appreciate how hard they work for them. The majority of pupils are very well behaved in class and around the school. A small number of pupils do not behave well, but pupils say that teachers manage them well and help them to behave better. Pupils know and use the school values. They are respectful of others and pride themselves on their kindness, saying that they try to show random acts of kindness in school. Older pupils frequently support and help younger pupils. Pupils enjoy their responsibilities in school and are proud to be school councillors, house captains and sports captains. The wide range of clubs are very popular; these enrich school life and enhance the enjoyment the pupils have in school.

Parents appreciate the welcome and care they receive from the staff and say that school is like a family. One commented that 'Staff want what is best, socially, mentally and academically.'

You know the school well and have focused on the things that will make the most difference to the learning outcomes for pupils. Pupils have not achieved as well as they could academically in the past. You have rightly focused on monitoring pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning. However, historical systems in school make it difficult for you and your staff to analyse data, track pupils' progress and identify pupils' learning needs effectively.

Leaders have trained and monitored staff to ensure that they are helping pupils to identify how to improve and correct their work. You realise that pupils are not always making the best use of this advice. You would like pupils to be more able to show how they have changed and corrected their work.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to provide more opportunities for pupils to write independently, set challenging tasks for the most able pupils, especially in writing, have higher expectations for the presentation of pupils' work and accurately assess writing. Your English leader has tackled these aspects successfully. Pupils are proud to be awarded a fountain pen when their handwriting reaches a good standard. Standards in writing have risen sharply at key stage 2 in the past year. Evidence in pupils' books show that writing in key stage 1 is improving.

Governors have a good understanding of the school. They visit the classes regularly and understand the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are highly supportive of you and your staff, and have high expectations of you as a leader.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that good systems are in place for safeguarding. The school business manager keeps the single central record and records of all training meticulously. Care and welfare for pupils constitute a top priority at Fittleworth. Governors monitor safeguarding conscientiously. Adults are fully aware of how to report any concerns, practice is good and staff monitor pupils very carefully. However, records of referrals to other agencies, such as social services, need to show all steps in the process.

Pupils, parents and staff say that school is a safe place. Pupils trust their teachers and know that they will always help them. You have taught pupils about how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils and parents say that the incidence of bullying is low, but when it happens staff will resolve it quickly. Attendance is very good. You monitor it very closely and the reward of the weekly cup for good attendance is very popular with pupils.

## Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on safeguarding and attendance; the quality of leadership in the school; your actions to ensure that all pupils make good progress and whether your curriculum meets the needs of pupils taught in mixed-age classes.
- You have a clear vision for the school's future and have wasted no time in addressing the key areas for development. One parent said, 'The acting head is wonderful, providing a strong direction for the school.' You restructured your staffing, making a capable and effective senior leadership team. You have empowered them to monitor and train staff, and enabled them to introduce new systems and approaches to teaching. This has led to rapid changes in classroom practice and increasing improvement in the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Early years pupils are making good progress from their starting points. During the inspection, pupils were independently forming their letters and writing some simple three-letter words. Children have good phonic knowledge of the sounds they want to write. The teacher and the teaching assistants are skilled in teaching this age range and the classroom and outside area are well organised to provide interesting and stimulating learning experiences.
- In both English and mathematics, key stage 2 pupils have made good progress. Changes in planning, coverage and progression in the curriculum, expectations of pupils and the tailoring of learning to specific pupil needs have been effective. In addition, an emphasis on the use of high-quality texts in English has had an impact on both the quality of writing and reading.
- The new approaches have been adopted more slowly in key stage 1. However, the evidence in pupils' books shows that there has been progress in writing and mathematics since the start of the year, particularly at greater depth in writing and increased mathematics coverage.
- The very small number of disadvantaged pupils are making the same progress as other pupils in the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are making the same progress as other pupils in English. The special educational needs coordinator has recognised the need for additional support for mathematics and intervention programmes are in place. Data shows that these are effective.
- The curriculum is rich. The topics interest and excite the pupils. Parents appreciate the variety and breadth of the learning offered to their children and the way the topics are linked to a wide range of visits and experiences. One parent said, 'The school excels at giving them a rounded education with opportunities to enjoy sports, art, music, drama, forest schools and varied school trips.'
- You have arranged your timetable creatively to provide opportunities for year groups to be taught together as well as in their mixed-age classes. Specialist teachers allow pupils of the same age to have some subject lessons together. Recently introduced learning progressions for English and mathematics ensure that pupils receive age-appropriate learning opportunities in their mixed age range classes. Work in books is tailored carefully to the next steps in learning for

pupils and older pupils are involved in determining their learning targets.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they can accurately identify pupils' academic progress and enable teachers to identify learning needs more easily
- pupils make good use of the help they are given to improve and correct their work.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Corbett  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, and other leaders, seven governors, a group of pupils and the business manager. I telephoned a representative of the local authority. I visited all the classes in the school with you to observe teaching and learning. I also considered 12 responses to the staff questionnaire, seven responses to the pupil questionnaire and 35 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I took into account 10 comments written by parents. I analysed a range of school documents including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement planning, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures.