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Mrs Angela Wheatcroft
Headteacher
Goring Church of England Aided Primary School
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Dear Mrs Wheatcroft

Short inspection of Goring Church of England Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 March 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 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. There have been changes to the teaching team and a new deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2017. Together with your leadership team and skilled governors, you have created an ethos built on the school's core values of 'Belong, Believe, Achieve'. This inspires the school community, including staff, pupils, parents and governors, to work together to achieve your ambitious plans. There is strong teamwork within the school and the morale of staff is high. Parents are highly complimentary and appreciative of the school's work. This is reflected in the comment made by one parent who wrote: 'It is a lovely village school which provides the children with many different opportunities to learn and achieve, both within the curriculum and outside it.'

A few parents rightly commented on the fact that the school's buildings are in need of repair. Despite that, you and your staff have worked hard to provide a stimulating learning environment for pupils. Classrooms and corridors are alive with examples of pupils' work from across the curriculum. There are some particularly attractive examples of art that show a high level of skill, including portraits of Victorian characters. The school's grounds have been very well developed to provide pupils with spaces to run around as well as places for quiet reflection.

Pupils love school. They have very positive attitudes and this is reflected in their behaviour that is, at times, exemplary. Pupils get on very well together. They say that there is no bullying, but that adults listen to them and take their concerns

seriously. In classrooms, they are enthusiastic and keen to respond to teachers' questions. Pupils are polite, friendly and helpful towards each other and to adults. They feel that they are treated equally and fairly and that there is no discrimination. They say that there is nothing they would like to change about their school.

You and your leaders visit classrooms formally as well as informally. You look at work in pupils' books and provide helpful guidance to teachers to support them to improve their skills. Consequently, teaching is effective in most year groups. In 2018, pupils made progress in line with the national averages for the core subjects. Information held by the school shows that pupils' progress is strengthening, although it is weaker in writing and mathematics in some classes.

You and your leaders have addressed the issues for improvement since the previous inspection. However, you are aware that phonics teaching is not yet consistently strong across all groups. You are taking effective action to address this.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All policies related to safeguarding are reviewed regularly and take into account the most recent guidance from the government. All staff are well-trained and receive frequent updates regarding safeguarding practice. Consequently, staff feel well equipped to act should they have a concern about a pupil. All visitors to school are carefully checked and thorough background checks have been made on all adults who work in school. Records relating to safeguarding are very well organised so that information is easily accessible. Leaders have effective working relationships with external agencies. These ensure that pupils and their families receive the appropriate level of support in a timely way.

Pupils said that they feel safe in school. Through the curriculum, they are taught how to stay safe from external dangers, including road safety and the potential dangers from substance misuse. Pupils are taught to stay safe when using modern technologies. They are very aware that they should not provide any personal information or share photographs with strangers when using the internet. Governors, staff and parents agree that pupils are safe and well looked after in school.

Inspection findings

- In addition to evaluating the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils, we also looked at the following aspects of the school's work: the provision for pupils, and pupils' outcomes, in phonics; the extent to which the curriculum meets the needs of both boys and girls across the school; the actions taken by school leaders to ensure that all pupils make strong progress.
- School leaders were disappointed in the outcomes of the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2018. They reorganised the way in which phonics is taught in the Reception class and across key stage 1 so that pupils can work in smaller

groups. This means that activities are more closely tailored to pupils' learning needs. Teaching assistants receive training to improve their skills and lead some of these small-group sessions. School leaders commissioned an external review of the way in which phonics was taught and acted quickly on the advice given. Additional reading books were purchased to complement the phonics scheme. Children in Reception take reading books home at a much earlier stage than in previous years. Consequently, pupils make rapid progress in phonics.

- Most teachers and teaching assistants now provide high-quality phonics teaching that is effective. The proportion of pupils who are on track to reach the expected standard is much higher than in previous years. However, there remain a few inconsistencies in practice. Most lessons are brisk and lively and allow pupils to make good progress. However, there are times when there are too many different phonics activities in a lesson. Pupils become confused about what they are expected to learn and this weakens their progress.
- The curriculum has been exceptionally well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. It is very well structured so that pupils build their skills and knowledge in all subjects, including English and mathematics, sequentially. Pupils read and write when learning in other subjects and so practise and reinforce their literacy skills. Teachers develop links between subjects and these help pupils to deepen their understanding of what they are learning.
- The depth of the curriculum is reflected in the displays of pupils' work in classrooms as well as around the school. Work in pupils' books shows that they work hard in all subjects. They cover a lot of ground, especially in the upper part of the school. They deepen their knowledge and skills in all subjects, including history, geography and science. Topics are well thought out, and give an effective balance of activities that meets the interests of both girls and boys. Subject leaders are very well trained and maintain a strong oversight of how their subject contributes towards effective learning for all pupils.
- The planned curriculum is enhanced by a wide variety of extra activities that add to pupils' learning and enjoyment of school. During the inspection, Years 3 and 4 pupils were visiting an exhibition of 'The Wind in the Willows' at the local River and Rowing Museum. There is also an abundance of extra-curricular activities that pupils enjoy at the end of the school day.
- Pupils' assessment information shows that they are making better progress than in 2018. However, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching between year groups. This results in pupils making variable progress as they move through the school. Teachers in most year groups have high expectations and this is reflected in the level of challenge they pose. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils converted a two-dimensional shape into its three dimensional equivalent and then calculated the volume of that shape. Pupils were thoroughly absorbed in this activity and made a lot of progress. They said it was challenging but that they 'love a challenge'.
- Work in pupils' books shows variations in what teachers expect from them. In one class, the work in pupils' mathematics books was beautifully presented and demonstrated their strong progress. However, in another set of books, work was very untidy and led to errors in pupils' calculations and hindered their progress. It

was a similar picture with pupils' writing. While most teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do, a few do not challenge pupils' poor handwriting and presentation.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all teachers have high expectations and ensure that pupils present their work to a high standard
- progress in writing and mathematics is consistently strong across the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Joy Considine
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection, I spent time with you or your deputy headteacher observing English and mathematics being taught in upper key stage 2, and phonics being taught in key stage 1 and the early years. Together, we looked at work in pupils' books and discussed your own assessment of pupils currently in the school. I met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body, and I met with three subject leaders at the end of the day. I observed pupils in the playground during lunchtime and spoke to them to gain their views about the school. I reviewed a number of documents, including your development plans and minutes from the governing body's meetings. I also scrutinised documents relating to safeguarding procedures. I took into account the views of parents by analysing the 83 responses to the online survey, Parent View, including 82 free-text comments. I considered the views of staff by analysing 24 responses to the Ofsted survey.