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26 February 2018

Mrs Terry Hall
Amesbury Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Kitchener Road
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Salisbury
Wiltshire
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Dear Mrs Hall

Short inspection of Amesbury Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 February 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 October 2012.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement, which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since your appointment in September 2017, you have dealt with many staffing changes. You are, now, in a position to move ahead swiftly with the areas that need developing. You have a strong leadership team that is keen to move the school forward with you. You have been well supported by the local authority challenge and support partner who has maintained a sharp evaluation of what you need to do. She has provided valuable advice in what has been a difficult start for you for a host of reasons.

Pupils are happy and keen to share their pride in the school. They are very well behaved and eager to learn. They have an excellent start to their education in the well-led Reception. The school is vibrant and positive. Classrooms have good displays that add to pupils' learning. The site has extensive grounds; your site staff manage them with care.

Since the last inspection, leaders have worked to improve writing. This has been partially successful because this is a stronger area than reading and mathematics. However, achievement is just in line with the national average so you know there is more intensive work to do. Pupils are using cursive handwriting; they are proficient in key stage 2, especially the older pupils. Pupils' experiences are very varied. There

are pockets of good practice in teaching, but learning is inconsistent. Some teachers lack a thorough subject knowledge in English so more training is needed to support them.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records and checks are secure and detailed. Staff are trained well on how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation and the influences of radicalisation and extremism. Your deputy designated safeguarding lead makes sure that the increasing numbers of pupils who have complex needs are safe and secure in school. You, the deputy designated safeguarding lead and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) work determinedly, yet sensitively, with pupils, parents and carers and external agencies to monitor and support the most vulnerable pupils. Safeguarding arrangements are strong and part of the school's culture. The site managers are vigilant in their checks on the school grounds and are a credit to the school.

Inspection findings

- We discussed the improvements needed in English, especially reading. You have appointed a new leader of English. She has analysed the pupils' answers in the end of key stage 2 tests so that planning matches the areas in which pupils were less proficient. You have used the local authority English specialists to build up better resources that will enhance pupils' learning. The English leader has improved pupils' fluency of reading and made sure that pupils are reading at an age-appropriate level, at least. She is planning more detailed work on reading skills alongside the improvements in spelling and handwriting. It is early days for the implementation of the planning so the impact is not known. There is less evidence of higher-order reading skills which are so important for success in the end of key stage tests. You know that this is an area that requires further work.
- Next, we looked at mathematics because standards dropped in the key stage 2 tests in 2017, especially for middle-ability pupils. You have a leader for mathematics who was an adviser in the subject in a local authority previously. He joined the school in January but he has hit the deck running. He has ascertained the skill set of teachers and teaching assistants. He has held training sessions already and will be modelling the teaching of mastery mathematics after half term. Pupils are fluent in calculations, but teachers are not providing enough opportunities for mathematical reasoning and problem solving of greater depth. Too often, work is not adapted to the particular needs of pupils. Regardless of ability, pupils are given similar work to do. This means that the most able are not challenged and the low-ability pupils require regular support, which is not always forthcoming.
- A well-qualified and experienced SENCo was appointed in September 2017. The school has a high number of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities as well as highly complex additional needs. The SENCo has ensured that the register of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is accurate. There is a nurture room where pupils learn to work and communicate

cooperatively with one another. You have ensured that staff in charge of this area of work are providing appropriate support. You deploy teaching assistants in each classroom to work with pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. There has been no monitoring of this work so outcomes for these pupils are variable. Some teachers are not planning work according to pupils' individual needs, which is limiting pupils' progress.

- It is a similar picture for disadvantaged pupils. You use funding for counselling, the forest school, breakfast club and after-school clubs, which are important considerations. Disadvantaged pupils have the same experiences as others in the school. However, as with the pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, there has been no detailed evaluation of the individual barriers faced by pupils nor planning for their individual needs in learning. Although disadvantaged pupils have been achieving close to the national average in the end of key stage tests, a closer look at the performance information shows that too many have failed to achieve their potential.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- actions are focused on the main priorities that will improve standards and the quality of education in the school
- pupils are able to develop their mathematical skills in reasoning and problem solving
- pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are provided with learning that matches their potential, is sufficiently challenging and deepens their thinking
- pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress with support that stretches their learning so that they achieve their potential.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, leaders for mathematics and English, the SENCo, the chair and three governors, staff and pupils. I had a telephone conversation with the challenge and support partner from the local authority. I visited lessons in key stage 2 focusing on mathematics and English and a mathematics lesson in Year 2. I looked at the quality of work in pupils'

workbooks. I considered documentary evidence relating to the impact of the school's work, including safeguarding. I took into account 107 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, 20 comments written by parents and the 32 responses from staff to the Ofsted online survey.