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Mr Richard Hearn
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Dear Mr Richard Hearn

Short inspection of Langley Fitzurse Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 December 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 January 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment in September 2018, you have successfully led the school through a period of significant change. You have gained the confidence and trust of staff and parents. You have worked well with governors with a strong focus on the pupils' achievement and to strengthen the school's leadership structure. This is so that all pupils progress as well as they can. You are developing productive partnerships with another local primary school to share good practice in teaching, leadership and governance. You are ably supported by the assistant headteacher. In addition, your recent appointments have strengthened the quality of teaching in the early years and in the leadership of mathematics across the school.

You are rightly proud of the caring and supportive atmosphere at Langley Fitzurse. Pupils can articulate, and clearly respond well to, the school's mission to, 'amaze, excite and inspire'. Those I spoke to were enthused by the school's broad and interesting curriculum, which is enriched by a wide range of visits and clubs. Around the school, pupils behave very well and are polite and considerate towards others. They engage well with their learning in class and appreciate the warm relationships between staff and pupils which make their school feel 'like a family'. Most parents agree that their children thrive at school and typically commented through Parent View that you provide a 'friendly, progressive and approachable school that offers a rich curriculum'.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve the progress that pupils make in writing. Leaders have made sure that pupils write frequently

and at length for a range of purposes. Teachers' feedback in lessons helps pupils to improve the quality of their writing from teachers and their peers in lessons. As a result, most pupils have made progress similar to other pupils nationally. However, the progress of the most able pupils has not always been strong enough in recent years. You rightly identify the progress of the most able as a priority for improvement. As a result, I focused on the progress of the most able pupils in writing across the school as part of this inspection.

Middle leaders share your expectation that all pupils should make strong progress. They have identified areas for improvement. Closer links with governors have strengthened lines of accountability for leaders' improvements to teaching. Subject leaders are bringing about improvements, for example by making checks on the standard of pupils' problem-solving in mathematics. However, leaders responsible for mathematics and English are new to their roles and these improvements are not yet fully realised across the school.

Governors are a skilled and motivated group. A number of governors are new to their roles since the previous inspection. You provide governors with detailed information about pupils' welfare and achievement and as a result, governors know the school well. They provide increasing challenge to school leaders, for example in checking more robustly how well additional funding is supporting disadvantaged pupils. In addition, they are working with you to ensure that the school's website is up to date so that parents have access to the most recent statutory information. Leaders' plans for improvement sometimes lack precision in the goals that they set for pupils' progress and for improvements to teaching. This prevents governors from checking closely enough how well leaders are improving the work of the school or from challenging leaders to boost pupils' achievement.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have made sure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff training is up to date so staff understand how to identify risks to pupils. Staff act swiftly to follow up concerns, including by involving external agencies. Records are thorough and carefully maintained so that you can check that the school provides pupils with the right support. You have reviewed arrangements appropriately with your newly appointed safeguarding governor by completing the local authority safeguarding audit. You carefully record vetting checks on staff, governors and volunteers. The governor responsible for safeguarding scrutinises these records carefully.

Pupils I spoke to were very clear how the school works to keep them safe. This includes undertaking fire drills and teaching them how to ride their bikes safely. They told me that 'teachers listen' and that bullying is extremely rare. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to stay safe online.

Inspection findings

- I first looked at the effectiveness of the teaching of reading and phonics in the

early years and Year 1 class. In recent years, the number of pupils achieving the standard expected for their age in reading at the end of the early years has declined and is too low. Outcomes in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 have also been below those in other schools in recent years.

- Current pupils are making strong progress in their early reading skills. Expectations for their progress during the early years are now high. Staff carefully track children's knowledge of letters and the sounds they make and teach them how to blend sounds to read and spell new words. Adults check children's individual progress frequently and provide reading materials at the right level to help them to progress. As a result, children in the early years are acquiring good early reading skills and are being well prepared for Year 1.
- Staff also develop reading well in Year 1. Pupils learn new sounds and apply them by speaking in sentences and through spelling them accurately in their writing. As a result, most Year 1 pupils now read with greater fluency and can tackle unfamiliar words effectively when reading aloud.
- Next I considered how the most able pupils are progressing in writing across key stage 2. Leaders have made sure that pupils read high-quality texts to inspire their writing and to develop their vocabulary. Teachers set targets for each pupil to help them to write at a higher standard. In lessons, pupils share their writing with partners and give careful feedback to each other. As a result, they improve their work considerably and write with purpose across a range of contexts. In addition, the most able now write at length across a range of subjects. As a result, current workbooks show that the most able pupils write imaginatively using a wide range of vocabulary.
- Some aspects of the most able pupils' writing prevent them making better progress. Poorly-formed handwriting, incorrect use of more complex punctuation and poor spelling sometimes weaken the overall quality of their writing. The most able pupils sometimes apply common spelling patterns incorrectly in their writing. For example, they write 'grabed' instead of 'grabbed' and 'coverd' instead of 'covered'. Pupils edit and improve their writing but teachers do not place enough emphasis on helping them to improve their spelling, handwriting and punctuation.
- Finally I considered the effectiveness of leaders' work to make sure that more pupils reach the higher standard in mathematics. In recent years, too few pupils have achieved the higher standard at key stage 1, and the progress of the most able in key stage 2 has been weaker than in other schools. Leaders and governors recognise that the most-able pupils' ability to solve problems and think more deeply about mathematics needs to improve. The leader of mathematics has begun some improvements which are helping more pupils to reach the higher standard in Years 5 and 6.
- Current workbooks in Year 6 show that the most able pupils tackle more demanding questions and can explain their reasoning at length. As a result, these pupils are making stronger progress.
- In key stage 1, teachers make sure that pupils have a secure knowledge of number facts and that they help pupils to correct their misconceptions quickly. However, they do not yet challenge the most able well enough to apply their

learning to solve problems or to explain their thinking. Tasks do not always build on what pupils already know so that the most able make stronger progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide the most able pupils with more challenging tasks in mathematics in key stage 1 so that more achieve the higher standard by the end of Year 2
- the most able pupils in key stage 2 write with a high standard of spelling, handwriting and punctuation
- leaders' plans identify precisely how their actions will improve pupils' progress and achievement and how governors will check the impact of the improvements.

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

Yours sincerely

Claire Mirams
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and your leadership team. I met with the chair of governors and separately with school governors. I reviewed your plans for improvement, information on current pupils' progress and your own evaluation of the school's performance. I met with a representative of Wiltshire local authority. You and I observed teaching and I heard pupils read. We also reviewed pupils' workbooks together.

I met with a group of pupils and discussed their views about the curriculum, behaviour, bullying and keeping safe, including online. I scrutinised various safeguarding records.

I also considered 39 parent responses to the online survey, Parent View, eight responses to the staff survey and 32 responses to the pupil survey.