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Mrs Alison Sparks
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Sparks

Short inspection of Woodbury Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 31 October 2017, 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. As numbers of pupils increase, you, your staff and governors are focused diligently on securing the school's continuing success.

Your dedicated promotion of the school's core values of love, forgiveness, respect, courage, truth and generosity underpins the school's work. Your total commitment to providing a stimulating curriculum, in which strengths in sport and music complement those in literacy and numeracy, lies at the heart of the pupils' well-rounded education.

Your close partnership with the deputy headteacher forms the core of the school's strong leadership. You are fully supported by a determined and skilled governing body. All levels of leadership work well as a team. Collectively, 'Team Woodbury' checks all aspects of the school and provides rigorous levels of challenge and support to secure effective teaching and pupils' good progress.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement raised at the last inspection. Pupils respond positively to the many opportunities provided for them to review their own learning and to share ideas and make decisions about what they need to do next to improve. Pupils show good levels of resilience, persevere well with their tasks and relish challenging work with or without adult support. You provide good opportunities for teachers to engage in training and share and observe

best practice among their colleagues within the school and partner schools. This has helped to raise teachers', and in turn pupils', aspirations of what can be achieved. You recognise, though, that some boys are still not making fast enough progress in writing.

Pupils respect their teachers, work hard in lessons and warmly support each other in their learning. Pupils really enjoy being at school and behave extremely well. These views are fully supported by parents and summed up by one parent who wrote, 'The overall atmosphere at the school is friendly and welcoming as well as having a hard-working tone, set by the staff.'

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure a very positive safeguarding culture across the school and that arrangements for keeping pupils safe are fit for purpose. Leaders and administrative staff ensure that checks undertaken on staff, visitors and recruitment are stringent and secure.

All staff engage in frequent training to keep their skills and understanding of how to keep pupils safe up to date. They have clear knowledge of the school's policies and procedures around safeguarding. Leaders and administrative staff keep a detailed record of the training staff complete. This includes understanding of the 'Prevent' duty to protect pupils from the risks of radicalisation and extremism. Staff work sensitively and effectively with parents and external agencies to monitor and support any vulnerable pupils. The school has introduced an online computer system to record such information to ensure that appropriate action is taken promptly and checked regularly to keep pupils safe.

All the parents who responded to the online survey Parent View agreed that the school keeps their children safe. One parent, reflecting the views of most, wrote, 'I have always been very happy with the school – it is a lovely, safe environment and it is evident that the staff care very much about the pupils.'

All the pupils I spoke with told me that they feel very safe in school, 'because everyone cares about each other and teachers treat us with respect'. They said that they would have no hesitation in speaking to a member of staff if they had any concerns. Pupils showed that they know how to keep themselves safe and manage risk by, for example, only communicating with people that they know and trust when using computers.

Inspection findings

- My first key line of enquiry checked leaders' and teachers' efforts to improve pupils' progress in mathematics across key stage 2, including by girls whose previous attainment was high.
- In recent years, you have improved the teaching of methods of calculation and extended pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. Pupils respond eagerly to the frequent challenges that teachers present to them and relish sharing their

ideas with each other to advance their understanding. Pupils also show particularly good skills in reflecting on their learning and demonstrate their deepening understanding and reasoning skills by writing explanations about their work. This is helping pupils, including previously high-attaining girls, to correct mistakes and improve their work themselves. As a result, pupils in all classes are increasingly making good progress across the mathematics curriculum. You acknowledge that the strengthened emphasis on deepening pupils' understanding needs to be continued. This would help quicken the progress of those pupils who still lack confidence at times in tackling problems.

- My second line of enquiry explored what leaders and teachers have been doing to improve pupils' writing. You and your subject leader have taken account of the greater challenge of the curriculum and have raised teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve. As a result, teachers in all classes have placed a successful emphasis on extending pupils' vocabulary and encouraging pupils to write imaginatively.
- Pupils respond well to the frequent opportunities they have to write at length across the range of subjects, as for example in Year 3 when comparing Woodbury with Exeter. However, you have identified that at times in both key stages 1 and 2, pupils' ability to write at greater depth is restricted by less developed skills in spelling, grammar and punctuation. Consequently, in more recent terms, teachers have placed greater emphasis on developing these skills in pupils' writing. This has led to pupils being more focused on these features, which are frequently identified as specific targets for improvement. You recognise, however, that this work needs to be sustained so that all pupils, especially a small proportion of boys, achieve greater depth of learning in their writing skills.
- My third key line of enquiry examined why some boys have not achieved as well as girls during their time in the early years class. Most children start school with skills that typically match or slightly exceed those for their age. At times, some boys start with less developed physical, social and emotional skills. Most children make good progress from their starting points as seen in the above-average proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of their time in the Reception class.
- You have carefully analysed information about each child's progress and have identified the need to hasten the progress of boys. You have taken significant steps to rectify this issue. You now make sure that the learning experiences provided for the children match their needs and stimulate their interest. Boys, as well as girls, immerse themselves wholeheartedly in the wide range of practical and physical learning opportunities provided for them, both inside and outdoors. For example, boys and girls cooperated well and learned to equally good effect when searching for hidden words and engaging in early writing and number activities. As a result, you ensure that all children achieve well and make a successful transition into Year 1.
- Finally, I examined leaders' actions to improve pupils' attendance. Over time, the attendance of most pupils has been good. However, a small number of boys, either disadvantaged or those who have special educational needs and/or

disabilities, have been persistently absent. Over the past year, you have taken stringent, but supportive, action with parents and outside agencies to reduce this persistent absence. Your strong action has restored the school's overall above-average rate of attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- action continues to improve the quality of pupils', especially boys', spelling, grammar and punctuation throughout the school so that they are fluent and confident in their ability to deepen and extend their writing skills
- the focus on improving pupils' progress and deepening their understanding in mathematics is sustained across key stage 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Alexander Baxter
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and with the other staff with leadership responsibilities. I met with members of the governing body and held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority. I visited classrooms with you or with the deputy headteacher and together we scrutinised samples of pupils' work in books. I talked with individual pupils during visits to classrooms and with other pupils and support staff during the morning breaks. In addition, I examined a range of documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' attendance, progress and school self-evaluation and development. I took account of 74 responses to the Ofsted online Parent View survey and 63 additional written comments from parents.