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Mrs Liz Wiseman
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Wiseman

Short inspection of Chagford Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 February 2016, 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 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

- You are very ambitious for the pupils, staff and parents at Chagford Primary School. Since taking up your post, your strong commitment and passion for improving the quality of education for all who learn and work at the school has shone through. You have quickly established a very welcoming and caring culture which pupils, parents and staff report is 'open, receptive and trusting'. Staff and parents recognise this profound change in culture as a positive development. Your strong leadership is appreciated by parents and staff alike and illustrates the school's capacity for further improvements.

- Governors are also highly committed and ambitious for the school. Governors' links to a 'portfolio' area of responsibility keeps them fully informed of the impact of current actions identified in the school's development plan. However, governors do not interfere with the day-to-day running of the school. Their acute understanding of their strategic purpose ensures that they remain focused on contributing to the overall leadership of the school. Governors have not shied away from taking challenging decisions, for example to bring provision for two-year-olds into the school and tackle pupils' low attendance. Strong strategic actions are securing the future success of the school.

- Pupils' achievement for all groups across the school is good because you have a clear understanding of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. A higher proportion of pupils reach a good level of development by the end of Reception when compared to the national average. Attainment in the Year 1 phonics check is also above average. Almost all pupils reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and by the time they reach the end of Year 6, pupils' overall attainment is above the national standard expected. The proportion of pupils making more than the expected rate of progress between Year 2 and Year 6 is similar to other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics. However, in 2015 pupils' attainment and progress in writing dipped. Your rigorous plans and well-considered actions are arresting any further decline and quickly raising pupils' achievement to their previous high level.
- You have effectively tackled the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. Work is now matched more closely to pupils' individual needs. Pupils are writing longer, more extended pieces of writing. You, all staff and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school's development plans address the key priorities and clearly set out what you hope to achieve. All staff and governors have contributed to identifying the improvement priorities and the action planning process. Consequently, all feel involved and fully understand the part they play in securing improvements and are fully supportive of the actions planned. The open culture of leadership you have created is developing the skills of teachers and middle leaders significantly.

Safeguarding is effective.

- The school leaders are very careful and diligent in implementing safeguarding policies and procedures. All staff know individual pupils and their families exceptionally well.
- You, your business manager and governors ensure that all recruitment procedures and checks are rigorously carried out. Training for all staff is frequent, detailed and up to date, ensuring that they can carry out their duties effectively and are aware of the features of neglect and abuse. A recent visit to observe a safeguarding audit at a local school demonstrates your ongoing commitment to this area of work. Staff report that they are clear on what to do if they are worried about a child. Pupils spoken to are also clear on how to keep themselves safe online and feel very safe in school. Almost all parents report that they feel their children are safe in school due to the open and caring culture.
- You and your governors tackle head-on issues as and when they arise. Historically, absence rates at the school have been consistently higher than the national average for all groups of pupils. Despite considerable early resistance

from some parents, your rigorous actions to tackle this issue have led to profound improvements to pupils' attendance and punctuality. Having gained the confidence of parents, a much closer working and professional relationship now exists. Newsletters, assemblies and attendance certificates all celebrate pupils' good and improving attendance. They understand that the top 'platinum' award is much harder to achieve now. As a result of your efforts, all groups of pupils across the school now attend well and arrive at school on time. Pupils also attend well and are on time because they enjoy coming to school.

Inspection findings

- You know the precise need of each pupil exceptionally well. The detailed knowledge you hold is used very carefully to tailor support for each pupil. There was a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 last year. These pupils made good progress because you identified their particular needs early and put in place effective one-to-one support programmes for them. You are also creative and resourceful in how you use the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. You broaden their wider awareness and raise their aspirations, for example through residential trips to Grenville House, Brixham. Teachers now focus more closely on girls and those pupils who are disadvantaged during lessons. Activities requiring girls to explain and justify their mathematical understanding are extending their use of vocabulary well and ensuring that they are making good progress.
- The curriculum is broad and well balanced. It enables all groups of pupils to pursue their personal interests, such as gardening, as well as their academic development. The effectiveness of the curriculum is reflected in the good rates of progress pupils make as they move through the school. The curriculum is also making an effective contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being. Nurturing activities place a strong emphasis on resilience and perseverance; as a result, pupils' productivity continues to rise. You are developing high-quality plans to ensure that the National Curriculum in mathematics is fully met. Occasionally, the activities currently planned for pupils contain too much repetition. They fail to develop pupils' fluency in calculation methods and do not place enough emphasis on developing pupils' deeper problem solving and reasoning skills. On such occasions, pupils' learning falters.
- Teachers are held to account for the progress of pupils in their classes through one-to-one progress meetings with you every six weeks. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind are identified and given immediate support. Teachers understand your high expectations, are rising to the challenge and continually looking to improve their practice. Teaching assistants also play an important role in checking pupils' progress. As soon as pupils catch up they return to their class. Your investment in training for teaching assistants, combined with your careful monitoring of their impact, ensures that all pupils, regardless of when and by

whom they are taught, receive good-quality support and input. Consequently, teaching assistants feel valued and able to contribute to school developments.

- Following your previous inspection in January 2011, you were asked to plan activities for pupils to extend their writing in other subjects. Teachers now skilfully link subjects through interesting and stimulating experiences and topics such as Chinese New Year. The activities planned for pupils have a positive impact on their engagement with, and attitude to, writing. They also broaden pupils' cultural understanding well. Work in pupils' books and around the school demonstrates that they are writing more, and across a wider range of subjects. Pupils' core skills are developed well when, for example, writing about their egg experiments in science. Occasionally, pupils' learning slows when planned tasks do not focus closely enough on the impact their word, sentence or punctuation choices have on the reader.

- In 2014, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception in number and writing was below the national average. Leaders adapted plans to develop children's interest in these areas of learning well. At the same time governors took the strategic decision to provide good-quality sessions for two-year-olds. Consequently, staff have a better understanding of children's development, plan activities together across the whole age range and ensure that their transition into Reception at age 4 is seamless. Last year, children entering Reception were already known to staff and got off to a flying start with their learning and continue to make good progress from their starting points. In 2015, by the end of Reception, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development in all areas of learning was well above the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the experiences planned for pupils fully meet the requirements for the new National Curriculum in mathematics

- when writing, pupils fully understand what impact their word, sentence and punctuation choices have on the reader.

Yours sincerely

Richard Light
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the assistant headteacher, staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and five other governors. I accompanied you on visits to lessons and together we looked at work in pupils' books during these visits. I looked at the survey results from 'Parent View', the online questionnaire for parents. I met with a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6 to discuss their work and gain their views of the school. I evaluated the accuracy of your self-evaluation and reviewed a range of other documentation. I checked the effectiveness of your safeguarding arrangements and recruitment information.