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Mrs Caroline Burton
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Dear Mrs Burton

Short inspection of Hatherop Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 November 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 November 2013.

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 January 2017, you have tightened the tracking of pupils' progress. This has helped teachers to intervene more swiftly if pupils are not making adequate progress. You are aware that the most able pupils have not achieved well enough at greater depth in the end-of-key-stage tests. Your knowledge of pupils' progress is sharpening the focus on these pupils. You are supporting the other teachers to understand the data, too. As a result, pupils are achieving well and more are reaching their potential. You want to maintain this focus.

You have ensured that the school remains a focal point of the local community. Parents value the education that you are providing. You make sure that pupils experience different activities. Pupils respect each other and the staff. As one parent commented, 'The staff, facilities, activities and parents' community are all excellent.'

Since the last inspection, you have worked hard to improve pupils' writing. In the end-of-key-stage tests, pupils' progress in writing was in the top 25% nationally at key stage 2. Pupils are gaining 100% in the phonics screening check in Years 1 and 2. Pupils read regularly to improve their vocabulary. However, you are aware that the opportunities for extended writing could be greater. You want to see more writing done in other subjects in the curriculum.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school has policies to ensure that pupils are well protected. All staff, including governors, undertake training in child protection. You test the understanding of staff on a regular basis. The checks undertaken on staff and visitors and in recruitment are stringent. Staff know how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, and from the influence of radical or extreme views. You protect pupils well once the school day begins. The gates to the site are locked and the school is secure and monitored with closed-circuit television.

Inspection findings

- We discussed the work you are doing to improve mathematics. This has been a weaker area in the end-of-year tests at key stage 2. There is a focus on pupils knowing their times tables well in Years 3 and 4. This prepares pupils for the more complex work in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are competitive in their learning. Teachers encourage them to do well. Pupils are doing more reasoning and problem-solving in class. Pupils apply their learning to problems. Teachers ask pupils to explain their working out. Pupils learn to use the correct mathematical vocabulary. As a result, pupils are more fluent in their written explanations. There are new interactive white boards in classrooms. Teachers and pupils use these efficiently and enjoy mathematics more. The regularity of checks on pupils' progress helps those who are weaker. Teachers can support pupils immediately when there are misunderstandings.
- Next, we looked at the work done to ensure that pupils in key stage 1 are succeeding in gaining outcomes at greater depth in the end-of-year tests. Children who attend Reception at the school are doing well. Several are exceeding their early learning goals. Sometimes, children who come into school from other Reception classes are not as well prepared. You test new pupils to gauge their ability. By checking their learning, you help them to succeed. You are working with the teacher and teaching assistant in key stage 1. However, you want them to follow more closely those pupils who exceeded their early learning goals in Reception. These are the pupils who should reach greater depth in the end-of-key-stage tests. Your secure tracking supports more immediate intervention if pupils' learning is slipping. Nevertheless, you know that this is an area of work that needs to continue throughout the school.
- The special educational needs coordinator is well qualified. She took up post a year ago and has provided teachers with a range of strategies to use with pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Teachers appreciate this. They have gained confidence in teaching pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Pupils are achieving more. Many are doing as well as their peers.
- There are very few disadvantaged pupils in the school. You have managed their needs well. You remove barriers to learning, including issues with attendance. You involve parents. Teachers have a better understanding of the particular needs of pupils. You and staff at the school support disadvantaged pupils emotionally and academically. Your inclusive attitude permeates the school.

Everyone understands your values. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils are making stronger progress. They engage in activities with their peers.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able, including those who are disadvantaged, are provided with challenge:
 - to deepen their thinking and write at a greater depth
 - in mathematics, to develop reasoning and problem-solving
 - that enhances their higher order reading skills
- activities are planned in subjects other than English to develop pupils' ability to write extensively and accurately across a range of subjects.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Gloucester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Gloucestershire. 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 mathematics leader, the special educational needs coordinator and governors. I had a telephone conversation with the adviser for the local authority. I spoke informally with pupils. I visited lessons for all classes in the school. I looked at the quality of work in pupils' exercise books and considered documentary evidence relating to the impact of the school's work, including safeguarding. I took into account 42 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and 30 comments written by parents, plus the 16 responses from pupils and one response from staff to the Ofsted online survey.