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Mr Robin Smith
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Dear Mr Smith

Short inspection of Clanfield CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 November 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 November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained a good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Following a dip in some areas, notably in pupils' progress in writing in 2015 national tests, you and your leaders made a number of well-thought-out changes. In particular, subject leaders introduced effective, new approaches to teaching. This led to some strong achievement in 2016 national tests and examinations. However, you have rightly identified that pupils' progress in writing remains a priority for this academic year. You and your staff are determined to improve writing and have made further well-planned changes, to this end.

You, your leaders and the staff have an optimistic outlook. You are making the most of possibilities afforded by the building extension, for instance by developing the library so that there is a wider choice of books, including more choices of higher-level texts. This priority is well focused because, although pupils read to inspectors confidently and fluently, some pupils' books were not stretching enough. Pupils are self-confident, as a general rule, and consequently engage wholeheartedly in school life, taking full advantage of the many additional activities you offer. These include a range of leadership and mentoring roles, as well as an array of clubs. Pupils chatted to inspectors with self-assurance and candour, not only eager but also well able to share and evaluate their learning. They benefit from belonging to the close-knit school community which you and your staff have effectively fashioned. They nevertheless have a strong understanding of the world beyond school and diversity

of modern British culture. To achieve this, leaders and teachers explicitly place pupils' experiences and learning within a wider, global dimension. A good example of this was when the teacher introduced the class assembly and made links between the story being performed and stories from cultures and traditions across the world. Thus, the recommendation from the previous inspection report, relating to this aspect, is being effectively implemented.

You have ensured that subject leaders make a very positive contribution to developments. They receive external, high-quality training, effectively collaborate with colleagues in partner schools and regularly observe teaching and learning in the subjects they lead. Not only do subject leaders have very strong specialist knowledge but they also successfully transmit their knowledge and enthusiasm to their colleagues. Consequently, across the school, there is a high degree of consistency in both the application of agreed approaches and their impact on pupils' learning. Leaders' development is overseen very well by you and by the governors, who check it is sharply focused on improving pupils' outcomes. Teaching across the school is effective and is particularly strong in mathematics. For instance, pupils were being tremendously challenged in mathematics because they had to fully explain the approach they had chosen to multiplying fractions. In order to do this, they were encouraged to use diagrams and charts as well as words. In this way, the teacher developed pupils' mathematical reasoning very well and their progress was strong. This approach benefited all pupils, especially the most able.

Of note is the quality of teaching in early years. It is highly effective because carefully planned questions are used to help children make links between concepts and grapple with tricky, new ideas. In addition, early years staff carefully track children's learning, ensuring that they have ample opportunity to use mark-making to record their embryonic knowledge of number and phonics. This area for improvement from the previous inspection report has been very effectively tackled.

Outcomes in phonics were well above average in 2016. You are not complacent, and therefore, this academic year, you have further developed the teaching of phonics so that it makes a bigger contribution to improving pupils' writing, particularly spelling. In addition, you have strengthened the way pupils evaluate their own writing. For example, you have successfully trained pupils to identify aspects of their own writing that create an intense effect on the reader and reflect on how they could be refined further. Work in pupils' books indicates that pupils now make better use of key grammatical features to both structure their writing and engage the reader. You have also introduced storytelling to assist pupils in learning how to structure narrative and other types of writing. It is too early to evaluate the impact of storytelling on pupils' writing outcomes. However, you and your leaders are closely monitoring how well teachers implement this approach.

There is strong and effective collaboration between staff at all levels, including between teachers and their assistants. Following leaders' close scrutiny of the progress made by different groups of pupils in writing, teaching assistants are now deployed more strategically. In order to build greater expertise in supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, each assistant supports

pupils with similar needs. Close collaboration between staff has meant that new approaches, such as this, have rapidly become part and parcel of pupils' everyday experiences of learning. Close working relationships also contribute to the school's family feel. Parents praised this aspect highly. One commented, 'The staff are caring and child-focused and go to great efforts to really get to know the students as individuals.' No opportunity is missed for the school's 'team spirit' to be promoted. This was evident in the positive messages which you, the teachers and the pupils so effectively communicated in the school assembly I attended. Your high visibility at the start and end of the day also contributes to this very well. Your pupils enjoy school and want to attend. Pupils' attendance was above average in 2014/15 and was similarly high in 2015/16.

You have developed an effective new approach to assessing pupils' learning without using national curriculum levels. This approach is bespoke to your school and successfully enables you to gain a detailed picture of each pupil's strengths and weaknesses. You agree that you need to build more challenge into the system, so that pupils are required to succeed in a wider range of exacting performance indicators. This will support you in your goal to increase the proportion of pupils working at greater depth in national tests and assessments, especially the proportion of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1. Teachers are making good use of this new approach in both core and non-core subjects to ensure that tasks set provide opportunities for pupils to apply their skills at a deep level. This was demonstrated in a French lesson, when pupils could evidence the depth of their knowledge by correctly applying vocabulary when both speaking and writing French.

Governance is a strength, following a number of changes, including a new chair of the governing body. Governors have a wide range of relevant skills and acumen. They employ these effectively when checking that the school is providing a high quality of education, including for disadvantaged pupils. In response to the area for improvement in the previous inspection report, governors now keep a very watchful eye on the implementation of the school development plan. The professional, well-informed and effective way they do this has supported subject leaders in ensuring that the new approaches introduced are having the anticipated impact.

In order to evaluate the impact of actions using a very comprehensive body of evidence, governors sensibly carried out a highly effective survey of parents' views. Most parents' responses were very complimentary, especially about how well the school nurtures their children. However, a number mentioned communication as an issue. This also came up as a concern in the free text responses on Parent View.

Safeguarding is effective.

As the designated leader, you have ensured that safeguarding records are detailed and the vast majority are of high quality. However, you do not consistently provide a chronological overview of the actions you take. You are very aware of this and are currently summarising your detailed records. Of note is your insistence that all staff, including those running before- and after-school clubs, vigilantly record concerns, no matter how small. This is so that you have the level of detail you need to make

an informed decision as to whether to make a referral to the local authority's welfare services. It also enables you to share appropriate information with staff, which assists them in their efforts to keep children safe. In recent weeks, your staff briefings have rightly focused on making sure that pupils are kept safe during the building work.

You have in-depth knowledge of each pupil and their family life, which has enabled you to deploy resources where they are most needed. For example, to support pupils who find it difficult to manage and communicate their emotions, a teaching assistant has been trained so that she is able to provide appropriate emotional support. Where necessary, the assistant also provides support for families. This work is closely overseen by an educational psychologist, who ensures that the guidance provided is appropriate and carefully recorded.

Inspection findings

- The headteacher is highly visible and knows the pupils very well. He uses his extensive knowledge to ensure that pupils receive the help they need and access opportunities that enable them to develop further. Parents appreciate the headteacher's high visibility, one commenting, 'I am able to discuss any concerns with the headmaster as he greets us all on a daily basis in the school yard.'
- Leaders and governors have high standards and have clearly identified where further improvements are required, based on their thorough analysis of pupils' outcomes in 2015 and 2016 national tests and assessments.
- Improvement plans are detailed. Governors' and leaders' checks rightly focus on whether planned changes are leading to better progress for the groups of pupils with weaker progress, according to recent key stage 2 national tests. They also focus sharply on the achievement and attendance of disadvantaged pupils across the school.
- Governors have used their expertise in developing a set of well-focused and far-reaching recommendations in response to concerns over communication raised by a number of parents in a questionnaire. These recommendations have yet to be implemented. Some parents raised similar concerns in their Parent View responses during the inspection, although most responses were positive.
- Governors scrutinise safeguarding very effectively. They carry out spot checks to see if the school is adhering to guidance about the safeguarding checks that need to be made when staff and volunteers join the school. Following feedback from governors and parents, additional staff are now on duty in the playground at break and lunchtimes.
- In 2016, following improvements, pupils' progress in key stage 2 mathematics tests was above average, in reading it was in line with average and in writing it was just about average. Progress in mathematics was strongest due to effective teaching. However, less-able pupils and pupils who have special educational

needs and/or disabilities made significantly less than average progress in writing. Pupils' attainment in mathematics and reading was well above average, but in writing it was more in line with average.

- Subject leadership was developed last academic year, following some weaker results in 2015. This has enabled subject leaders to make a substantial contribution to improving the school, and two subject leaders are now senior leaders. Subject leaders are undertaking a national training programme this year, which is supporting them further with their work. They are using their training to ensure that the checks they make on the impact of new approaches are rigorous and well evidenced.
- Further improvements have been made this term to the way writing is taught and the way teaching assistants are deployed, to improve pupils' achievement in writing. Emphasis has been placed on strengthening writing support for identified groups, especially for less-able pupils in spelling.
- Teachers use storytelling techniques, introduced at the start of term, with a high degree of consistency. Pupils in the mixed Year 3/4 class performed their writing as a group in assembly. They confidently explained the different skills they had gained in doing this. However, it is too early to evaluate fully the impact of storytelling introduced in September 2016, although teachers and pupils told inspectors how much they enjoyed this approach.
- In key stage 1, pupils achieved above national expectations, with an above-average proportion working at greater depth in reading and mathematics and a much higher than average proportion in writing. The school was not moderated for writing by the local authority, but sensibly checked the accuracy of their assessment of writing with partner primary schools.
- Highly effective teaching in Reception enabled 100% of children to reach a good level of development in 2016. Delving questions are used to great effect. For example, through the teacher's probing questions, children worked out how doubling is closely linked to adding.
- In 2016, pupils achieved well above average in the phonics screening check, with 93% reaching the expected standard at the end of Year 1. Further effective developments in the teaching of phonics mean that pupils are increasingly able to link their phonic understanding with spelling rules. This was seen in the Year 1/2 class when pupils were using their phonic knowledge to speculate on the spelling of rhyming words in poems they had written.
- The overall proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average and varies from year group to year group. The number of disadvantaged pupils was typically less than five in Reception class, Year 1 and Year 2, last academic year. The school closely monitors their progress on an individual basis.
- In key stage 2 in 2016, there were more disadvantaged pupils taking national assessments than in key stage 1. In reading and writing, disadvantaged pupils'

progress was broadly in line with others nationally, but in mathematics disadvantaged pupils made better progress than others nationally.

- Teaching in mathematics is highly effective because the subject lead has undertaken additional subject specialist training. She has supported teachers well in employing methods which are successfully developing pupils' mathematical reasoning.
- The school has introduced a bespoke approach to assessing and tracking pupils' progress. The approach has supported teachers because it enables them to identify precisely the areas of learning where pupils are less confident. It also helps them to spot the pupils who are falling behind. The school recognises that the approach could be further developed so that it better supports teachers in their efforts to make sure that pupils make the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- Teaching in non-core subjects is effective because pupils' progress is tracked carefully using the school's bespoke approach. For example, in French, pupils rapidly learned how to incorporate vocabulary to describe different types of hair into their verbal and written responses to questions. The teacher provided some pupils with well-planned additional support to achieve this. As a result, all pupils made strong progress.
- Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy school. Consequently, attendance was above average from 2014 to 2015. The school's own records show that in 2015 to 2016 it was above the national average for the previous year. National attendance data for the last academic year is not yet available.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe, including while building work is being undertaken, and that incidents of bullying are very low. Pupils behave well and adhere to the school's values. They are fully aware of the contribution that a plurality of cultures and traditions makes to their own experiences and knowledge. Due to the effective promotion of fundamental British values, pupils know how these guiding principles dovetail with their school's values.
- Pupils enjoy reading, although the school library is not yet up and running following the building expansion programme. The most able read exceptionally fluently, with some needing books that are more challenging. Less-able readers made very good use of their phonic knowledge to work out how to blend letters when reading unfamiliar words.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- approaches to assessment are refined so that they better support pupils in making the rapid progress of which they are capable
- they fully implement governors' effective recommendations for improving communication.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hubbard
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The lead inspector, along with the headteacher, agreed the key areas that would be focused upon during the inspection. They were drawn from the school's own evaluation as well as the requirement to judge the effectiveness of safeguarding. They included the breadth and depth of the curriculum, the school's new approach to assessment, the impact of improvements in writing and the impact of actions to improve the proportion of pupils working at greater depth in key stage 1. In addition, one of the key lines of enquiry was focused upon subject leaders' monitoring of improvements; another related to the governing body's monitoring role. The effectiveness of safeguarding was also a key line of enquiry.

I met with subject leaders (who are also year group leaders), who used pupils' books to illustrate the impact of their improvements on outcomes and also shared information on pupils' achievement. I also met with a group of staff, comprising all the teachers and assistants, and held a separate meeting with four governors (one of whom was the school's business manager). I made a telephone call to the chair of the governing body, who was not able to attend the meeting. I met separately with the headteacher to discuss safeguarding and attendance and made follow-up calls to a local secondary school to make further checks. I listened to a group of pupils read and talked with them about how safe they felt at their school and about their learning. Short visits were made to lessons in key stages 1 and 2, as well as in early years, to observe learning in core subjects, phonics and some non-core subjects. Most visits were accompanied by the headteacher. I observed pupils' behaviour in a range of situations, including in lessons and around school. I also attended an assembly and the after-school care club. The 42 responses parents made to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 24 comments made via free text were considered. I also considered the 10 responses to the staff questionnaire and 11 survey responses made by pupils. I analysed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the latest improvement plan, information about pupils' progress and safeguarding documentation.