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Mrs Samantha Saville  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Saville

### **Short inspection of Ashton Keynes Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 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 April 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Following your appointment in September 2014, you have worked highly effectively to raise pupils' achievement, enjoyment and well-being at the school. Your passion, energy and commitment is described by pupils, staff and parents alike as 'inspirational'. As a result, you have improved the culture of the school so that pupils take a full and active part in the running of the school as well as in lessons. Pupils told me that this is a 'wonderful, inspiring and caring' school. Parent views reflect this. One parent, whose view was typical, wrote, 'Ashton Keynes is phenomenal... (you) and all staff are truly fantastic and want every child in the school to be the best they can be!' The school's vision, 'Shine bright and reach for the stars' impacts positively on all aspects of the school life.

The quality of teaching and learning across the school is improving strongly. This is reflected in the continued improvement in pupils' outcomes in national test results in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2, and in the Year 1 phonics screening check. The children enjoy a positive start in the Reception Year, enabling them to make accelerated progress as a result of well-planned and tailored activities. As a result, children are ready for Year 1 and the challenges that this brings. You have worked successfully with others, including governors, to improve teaching so that this is aspirational and challenging, yet suitably tailored to the needs of different pupils. In addition, the appointment of your deputy in

September 2016 is building further capacity through her effective leadership skills and exemplary teaching in Year 6.

You have successfully met the challenges set through the last inspection. Improved teaching is continuing to raise the achievement of pupils across the school so that pupils leave the school well prepared for their next challenges. The majority of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, you and your senior leaders are aware that there are some pupils who still require further support and intervention. In relation to other previous inspection findings, pupils now typically spell well and present writing neatly, although there is some remaining variability in key stage 1 classes. Finally, teachers and teaching assistants are delivering high-quality mathematics lessons, in particular through developing and deepening pupils' problem-solving skills. Pupils show a range of age-appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding in mathematics, including being able to think, reason and explain their working effectively.

As we discussed, there are still particular aspects of the school's work which continue to need strengthening. These are primarily focused on teachers' expectations in key stage 1. Namely, teachers do not have the same high expectations of pupils' writing across the curriculum as seen in pupils' core English books. Additionally, teachers do not routinely develop and deepen pupils' subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding, especially in science, history and geography. As a result, pupils do not meet the same high standards across the full range of subjects, especially in key stage 1.

### **Safeguarding is effective**

Together with other leaders, staff and governors, you are fastidious in protecting pupils and raising the profile of safeguarding through the school's work. You take every opportunity to remind staff about safeguarding alerts and updates. Effective training and induction is in place so that all staff, governors and volunteers maintain the highest levels of vigilance and awareness. As a result, you respond to the needs of pupils and work effectively in preventing harm or risk in various situations. You also work effectively, as appropriate, with the full range of external agencies in keeping pupils safe. This has also had a positive impact on pupils' attendance. Additionally, other trained staff, for example the emotional literacy support adviser and deputy safeguarding leader provide high quality support to pupils and their families. Safeguarding is checked robustly by governors who understand the prominence this must play in the work of the school. As a result, the leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, records are detailed and of high quality and staff know what to do in any instance to protect pupils from harm.

Pupils report that they feel safe, including knowing how to stay safe online. They know what bullying is and are adamant that this is exceptionally rare in the school. In all cases, pupils have confidence in staff that any concerns or worries are dealt with quickly and efficiently. The culture in the school strongly reflects the school's

values of 'friendship, trust, perseverance and creativity'. These ensure that pupils take care of each other and are keen to support one another in a range of situations. This is a happy school with a strong and prevailing culture for safeguarding.

### **Inspection findings**

- My first key line of enquiry focused on the rates of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1. This is because previous 2016 national test results showed slower progress for some groups of pupils. You have taken effective action through strong processes and systems to hold teachers to account to ensure that pupils make strong progress. You track pupils well from their different starting points. Professional meetings with staff agree key strategies for improvement, including interventions run by teaching assistants, so that pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, can improve key skills in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, outcomes are improving well and the end of key stage 1 results in 2017 indicate a high level of performance. However, as we discussed, pupils' writing in other subjects across the curriculum does not consistently reflect the same high standards as seen in pupils' core English books. This is particularly true for the most able pupils who are not consistently challenged to write with the same depth, substance or amount in topic work. Also, across key stage 1 there are some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who still require some additional support or intervention to catch up.
- My second line of enquiry focused on the quality of pupils' skills and the quality of their writing in key stage 2. This is because pupils' progress over the key stage was consistently lower than the national average in the preceding years, up to and including 2016. However, over the course of this academic year, you have revised key teaching approaches and also raised expectations of what the pupils can achieve. You have ensured that all teachers have had high-quality opportunities to evaluate their teaching through peer work and coaching which has focused teaching on the right areas for improvement. In addition, pupils are now keenly aware of what they need to do to improve. They are well supported and challenged by useful prompts and guidance which ensure they can proofread, edit and improve their own work set against national standards. For example, in Year 6, pupils are challenged to include the full range of complex punctuation to convey meaning and add sophistication or depth to their writing. Finally, the school's tracking processes mean that pupils who are falling behind are quickly identified and effective interventions are put in place to accelerate their progress. Altogether, this is raising the quality of pupils' writing. In 2017, pupils' rates of progress from prior attainment at the end of key stage 1 is particularly strong.
- My third key line of enquiry focused on pupils' attendance, because in 2016 attendance rates were low for pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You have worked effectively with parents, other school staff, governors and external partners (such

as the education welfare officer) to identify pupils and families and support them in improving pupils' attendance. You respond rigorously where you have the greatest concern, for example, with letters through the education welfare service. As a result, attendance for all pupils and groups has improved. Overall attendance is in line with the national average. Attendance for pupils who are eligible for free school meals is now broadly similar to all other groups. The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also typically in line with the national average.

- My fourth line of enquiry focused on the development and acquisition of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding across the full range of subjects. Since your arrival at the school, you have made improving pupils' learning behaviours and attitudes a priority. You have focused on ensuring that the school environment and curriculum promote pupils' own curiosity, interest and activity. For example, cultivating the spiritual garden and forest school areas offer breadth and diversity to enhance pupils' learning and experiences. Consequently, pupils are highly motivated and benefit from a wide and broad curriculum where they can transfer and apply key skills in a range of situations. Furthermore, pupils are encouraged to take part in various clubs and councils, such as the worship council or eco-council where they also develop social, emotional and communication skills. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop key subject-specific skills in key stage 1, especially in science, history and geography. This means that pupils, especially the most able, are not always challenged to ask their own questions or formulate their own hypotheses in these wider subjects. They do not have sufficient high-quality opportunities to test, record, evaluate or reason routinely, which stifles their ability and development in these key areas of the curriculum.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that pupils in key stage 1:

- demonstrate the same high standards when writing for different reasons across the curriculum
- develop and deepen subject-specific skills in the wide range of subjects, including science, history and geography.

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

Stewart Gale  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

We agreed the timetable and inspection activities for the day. I worked extensively with you and the deputy headteacher across the whole day. I also met with other leaders, including subject leaders. I scrutinised safeguarding records and discussed a wide range of matters related to safeguarding, including staff recruitment and vetting procedures and recent audits. I reviewed evidence and case studies for multi-agency working to keep children safe. Together, we visited lessons in the early years foundation stage, as well as key stages 1 and 2 to evaluate the effectiveness of provision across the school. This involved scrutinising a wide range of books and talking with different pupils in line with our agreed key lines of enquiry. I also met with representatives of the governing body (including a governor who joined the discussion via speaker phone). I reviewed school documents, including the school's self-evaluation summary and samples of governors' visits. I also spoke with a sample of key stage 2 pupils. Furthermore, I took full account of the 130 responses to Parent View and the 108 responses made by pupils, as well as further free-texts received for the inspection.