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Mr Ben Hewett
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hewett

Short inspection of Chew Stoke Church School

Following my visit to the school on 20 June 2018, 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have the confidence of staff, governors, parents, carers and pupils. The strong partnership work you promote is significant in the continuing success of your school. Roles and responsibilities are understood well. You clearly communicate the school's vision to ensure that pupils are 'confident in learning, caring in life', and you have high aspirations for everyone. You have built an effective leadership team that shares your vision for pupils' success. Working together, you are all determined to help pupils to make the best possible progress to ensure that they are socially, emotionally and academically well equipped to deal with the next stage of their education.

You recognise that, for pupils to achieve their best, a culture of continuous improvement is required. Together with your leadership team and governors, you have an accurate view of the school's strengths and of what needs to be improved further. Pupils' and parents' views are taken into account, with what is best for pupils firmly at the heart of all decisions made. You draw well on the expertise of staff in the school, from neighbouring schools and from other professionals, to continually improve the quality of teaching. You access specific support for pupils and their families to help them overcome what are, at times, significant barriers to success.

Parents' confidence in the school is high. Capturing the very positive views expressed by many, one parent commented, 'I am hugely impressed to see, and

feel, the sense of community that provides a secure and happy environment for the children to develop and learn.' Pupils are complimentary about their experiences at school. 'It's fun,' and 'I really love it and I learn a lot,' were typical of their comments when I asked them for their views about being at school.

Improvements across the school are evident since the previous inspection. Teachers' planning takes good account of what pupils already know, so, typically, activities move pupils' learning on well. You are continuing to explore how to lift the level of challenge in mathematics activities further, particularly for the most able pupils. Pupils receive regular guidance to help them to improve their work. Pupils understand how to present their work well, and teachers expect it of them. You promote collaborative leadership. By accessing high-quality training, your subject leaders are knowledgeable, skilled and able to contribute well to school improvement. Senior leaders provide effective guidance for staff to ensure consistently effective leadership in all aspects of the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school's caring and supportive ethos is very evident and pupils' well-being and safety are paramount. There is a strong safeguarding culture in school. Staff and governors are very clear that they are all responsible for keeping pupils safe. A number of parents recognise that, because of good communication within the school, their child's specific needs are understood and that you deal with any issues quickly and sensitively. Staff are confident that pupils are safe at school, and all parents who responded to the questionnaire agree.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are meticulously maintained and regularly audited by you and your knowledgeable governors. Recruitment procedures and checks on adults working or volunteering in the school are thorough. Staff and governor training are up to date. You liaise effectively with other professionals to secure, when appropriate, specific and timely support for pupils and their families.

Pupils told me that they feel well cared for and safe at school. They develop strong friendships and are proud to be given the opportunity to take on responsibilities. Pupils are confident that most pupils behave very well. As one pupil put it, 'Occasional silliness is sorted out quickly, often by pupils themselves.' Pupils were particularly keen to tell me that they feel supported and listened to. They understand how to keep themselves safe, including when using technology. Pupils are confident they would get help from an adult if they have a question or concern.

Inspection findings

- We agreed at the start of the inspection the lines of enquiry we would focus on. First, we considered whether more pupils in key stage 2 should achieve the higher standard in mathematics.
- You have supported the mathematics leader to implement a number of strategies that have resulted in pupils making better progress this year. Teachers have

received high-quality training and share their expertise, so they understand how pupils' knowledge and skills develop over time. They assess pupils' work accurately and use the information well to plan learning. This enables pupils to make good, and for some, rapid progress. By accessing a wide variety of resources, pupils are able to consolidate their understanding in a practical way. Teachers show pupils how mathematics has relevance in their lives. For example, Year 4 pupils quickly realised the importance of understanding the 24-hour clock when planning to catch a holiday flight.

- Teachers are skilled at identifying when pupils have gaps in their learning. However, they do not always respond quickly enough to help pupils address these gaps, and, when this happens, pupils' progress slows. Teachers provide pupils with incisive feedback about their work. Pupils do not always take note of this feedback, and an opportunity to move their learning on swiftly is missed.
- The most able pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given activities that require them to work together to solve challenging problems. They said that these activities make their learning exciting and help them to learn in a different way. They make rapid progress and achieve a high standard as a result. The most able pupils in Years 3 and 4 are not challenged in the same way. Consequently, they do not make fast progress towards achieving the higher standard.
- Our next line of enquiry explored how well leadership is ensuring that disadvantaged pupils achieve well. You work closely with other leaders, including, when appropriate, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), to ensure that each pupil receives the support they need. Pupils make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. The help provided is varied and can include activities to assist with pupils' social and emotional development, as well as their academic progress. Skilled support staff are deployed effectively. Working closely with teachers, they provide precisely focused activities that enable pupils to overcome their individual weaknesses. The help provided is kept under review, and, if necessary, it is modified to ensure that each pupil is afforded the best possible opportunity to learn well.
- Finally, we focused on how leadership has secured the marked improvement in pupils' writing. You have worked with the English subject leader to implement a number of procedures that are ensuring that pupils make good progress and achieve well. These include a whole-school strategy that has helped pupils to spell with greater accuracy and use grammar and punctuation correctly. Teachers frequently check with each other, and with teachers from other local schools, to ensure that their assessment of pupils' work is accurate. As a consequence, lessons are focused effectively on moving pupils' learning on quickly.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils respond well to the feedback they receive and work hard to improve the quality of their writing. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to apply and practise their writing skills when working in other subjects. Stimulating texts are used very well to inspire pupils. For example, when focusing on describing the scene from a picture book, one Year 6 pupil wrote, 'the sparkling, glistening lights highlighting the magical terrain'. Pupils are keen to develop their own ideas and to share them with others. The open celebration of what makes a good-quality piece of

writing motivates pupils to strive for excellence.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Teaching enables even more pupils to make rapid progress in mathematics in key stage 2, so more achieve the higher standard, by:
 - making sure that the most able pupils in Years 3 and 4 are provided with the same challenging opportunities to work on open-ended problems as pupils in Years 5 and 6
 - ensuring that pupils use the feedback they receive to improve their learning
 - addressing any gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills quickly.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Cogher
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with senior leaders, including the deputy headteacher and SENCo. Seven members of the governing body, including the chair, met with me to discuss their work, changes since the last inspection and their aspirations for the school's future. I had a telephone discussion with your leadership support partner. We considered a range of documents including self-evaluation and safeguarding information, and the school's improvement plans. I gathered parents' views by speaking to them at the start of the school day and through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also considered responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires, and spoke to pupils in lessons and at breaktime. We observed pupils working in each class and looked at pupils' work and information about pupils' progress.