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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Kirsten Kennedy
Headteacher
William Gilpin Church of England Primary School
Pilley Hill
Boldre
Lymington
Hampshire
SO41 5QG

Dear Mrs Kennedy

Short inspection of William Gilpin Church of England Primary School

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

This school continues to be good.

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You became the new headteacher at the beginning of this school year. Parents, governors and staff appreciate the dedicated way 'you have hit the ground running' to re-energise the school. You know the school well and have quickly galvanised the community behind your ambition for further improvement. You have recognised good practice in the school, evaluated strengths and weaknesses accurately and identified your priorities for improvement clearly. You know that other leaders who are new to their roles need to develop their leadership skills further, so that they can help you to drive improvements more rapidly.

Pupils behave well in lessons and in the playground. Pupils understand the school's expectations and can explain confidently what these mean to them. They told me why it is important to be kind to new pupils who come to the school because 'everyone is welcome'. They respect their teachers and want to please them. They take a genuine pride in their work. For example, Reception pupils asked to show me their writing, which they had just completed and was already on display. Pupils are particularly proud of their school's special feature, the natural environment of the 'Forest School'. In this dedicated open space, pupils cooperate with each other to explore, reflect, construct and create.

Parents are positive about the school's work. One described it as a privilege for her children to attend a school with such strong partnerships between teachers and

parents. You and your staff are prepared to go out of your way to support individual pupils whatever their needs. This means that pupils are well prepared for secondary school, academically, socially and emotionally.

Governors provided stability and direction during a period of significant change in the school's leadership. They helped the school to reach its current settled position. They have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's performance. Governors welcome the increased information you are giving them about pupils' progress. This means that they are now able to hold you to account more effectively.

At the time of the last inspection, inspectors recognised the school's many strengths in teaching and learning. They asked leaders to improve pupils' outcomes in mathematics. The school responded to this challenge by making lessons more practical and interesting. Pupils' attainment in mathematics quickly improved as a result of leaders' actions. Inspectors also identified a need for more pupils to reach higher standards by the time they leave the school. The school's response to this has been partly successful. Proportionally more pupils than the national average reached the higher standard in reading in 2016. However, progress in reading, writing and mathematics remains in line with that of all pupils nationally. You are determined to rise to the challenge to ensure that an increasing proportion of pupils leave the school making better than expected progress in these subjects. Consequently, you have implemented rigorous systems to track pupils' progress and put further actions in place where needed.

We agreed that teaching and learning can improve still further so that your ambitions for pupils are achieved. You have appropriate plans in place to ensure that the school makes more rapid progress from this point forward.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. Staff and governors understand their responsibilities because of the appropriate and up-to-date training they have received. Communication regarding any concern is diligent, both within the school and beyond, which enables everyone to work together well.

Parents and pupils confirm that the school is a safe place to be. Pupils are taught how to stay safe and regular newsletter items encourage parents to emphasise these messages with their children. Pupils report that there is hardly any bullying and they are confident to tell any adult should an incident occur. They show care towards each other by acting as role models for younger pupils, and by being a buddy for any pupil who might be anxious or lonely.

Pupils' attendance is good, although historically the absence of a small number of disadvantaged pupils has caused some concern. You actively promote good attendance, and holidays in term time are no longer authorised.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I focused on: the recent improvements that have led to higher achievement in phonics (letters and the sounds that they represent) and reading in 2016; how the school meets the needs of the small numbers of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; and how well the school provides challenge to pupils of average ability.
- Pupils in key stage 1 have good understanding of phonics because teaching has recently become more skilful. Almost all pupils reached the expected standard in 2016. Pupils' reading comprehension does not match their phonic skills, and you are taking steps to address this. Pupils in key stage 2 enjoy reading books and are encouraged to tackle challenging texts. They are developing a love of literature and many pupils choose to read in their own time. They talk about their favourite types of book and give thoughtful reasons for their choices. Pupils in Years 5 and Year 6 recently brought their class reading to life through an art project. They use vocabulary from their reading competently to enrich their own writing.
- Current pupils are making good progress. Recently, you have put into place thorough monitoring of pupils' learning, and teachers regularly discuss details of each pupil's progress so that the need for any extra support can be identified quickly. Your aim is that any pupil who is not on track is boosted to achieve the expected standard. You are determined that this happens and frequently review the difference that teaching and support make to an individual's progress. Consequently, pupils who are disadvantaged are making more rapid progress this year in reading, spelling and mathematics. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making progress in line with the national average for pupils with similar starting points. They develop confidence and independence as they move through the school.
- We saw in lessons that the few pupils who speak English as an additional language are not making progress as quickly as they could. Leaders are taking effective action to develop staff's expertise using external advisers.
- You expect your staff to do whatever it takes to ensure that pupils achieve well, especially where pupils face a barrier that prevents them from doing their best. For example, you have recognised that some pupils' handwriting in key stage 1 is not well formed and this prevents them from writing fluently. You have asked staff to take corrective steps so that all pupils present their work neatly and write with ease.
- Current Year 6 pupils write with growing sophistication. They edit their work competently to correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. They reflect upon and develop their own and others' writing to make it more interesting. You have identified that pupils need to develop their editing skills further so as to reach the highest standards.
- You are working with teachers to ensure that mathematics lessons give pupils the opportunity to deepen their understanding of new concepts. Your teachers

increasingly use skilful questioning and provide challenging tasks to accelerate pupils' progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- middle leaders develop in their new roles so that they are increasingly more effective in supporting school improvement
- more pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, achieve the highest standards by the end of KS2 in reading, writing and mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Linda Jacobs
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, you accompanied me on visits to every class and year group. I observed pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning in classrooms and around the school. I held meetings with you and with the chair of governors accompanied by three other governors, and I spoke to groups of pupils during breaktime and on a walk to your 'Forest School'. I heard pupils read from both key stages. I talked to a representative of the local authority on the telephone. I met parents at the end of the school day and took into account 34 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the accompanying free text responses. I also considered 25 pupils' questionnaires. I scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including pupils' progress information, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, policies, minutes of governing body meetings and records of visits by the local authority.