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Mr John Paterson
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Paterson

Short inspection of Swanmore Church of England Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 31 October 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 May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders know the school well and are ambitious for its continuing improvement. You are keenly aware of what the school needs to do so that pupils' attainment and progress continue to rise. In recent years, governors have become a strong force for improvement. They ask you challenging questions because they want the best outcomes for all pupils.

Following the last inspection, you quickly addressed the areas for further development identified by inspectors. Leaders have developed teaching so that assessment is used sharply to identify pupils' specific needs. You lead a skilful team that is dedicated to ensuring that pupils enjoy school and achieve well. This means that pupils are increasingly well supported in lessons and through additional teaching that takes place outside of the classroom. Almost all staff said that the school has improved since it was last inspected. Teachers appreciate the professional development and support they receive to enable them to be effective in their roles.

Parents who spoke to inspectors value the dedicated way in which the staff team supports pupils to make good academic and social progress. Parents have a high regard for the breadth of the opportunities the school provides. One parent's comment, typical of many, captured this in recognising the school's 'emphasis on life skills and building a community so children of all ages know each other and are

able to work together and support each other’.

The school’s curriculum supports pupils to be enthusiastic learners. They talk in depth about their interesting topic work and are proud of their achievements. Pupils eagerly participate in the many after-school clubs, such as for sports, chess, choir and foreign languages, including Chinese. Key stage 2 pupils particularly enjoy their school’s unique attachment to a nearby wood, which they frequently visit. The development of their outdoor learning skills culminates in an opportunity to build their own bivouac in which to camp overnight. Pupils say this is one of the high spots of their time at the school, along with their participation in four other residential visits.

Pupils in Years 5 and 6 play an active role in the school and relish their responsibilities. These may include being a partner to a younger pupil, a librarian, eco-councillor or play leader. Pupils readily explain how the school’s Christian values of honesty, charity and respect help them to treat each other with kindness and consideration. They understand the need to respect differences in opinion and background.

The school supports a number of pupils from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Strong and mutually supportive relationships have been built over time between home and school. These pupils enjoy school and attend regularly, other than during the summer months when some families are travelling. The school takes steps to keep in touch with pupils during these periods.

Most pupils join the school with starting points that are broadly typical for their age. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, they are well prepared for their secondary education, with a higher proportion than the national average having achieved or exceeded the standards expected for their age. Provisional performance information for 2017 demonstrates that by the end of key stage 2, most pupils had made strong progress from their key stage 1 starting points.

Leaders rightly recognise that further improvements to teaching, learning and assessment are needed to increase the rate of progress for some pupils. This is particularly the case in mathematics. Greater precision in teaching is required to identify and address the needs of lower-attaining pupils, including some who are disadvantaged.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have made safeguarding a priority. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and that records are detailed and of high quality. All staff are trained in line with their level of responsibility, and the designated lead ensures that staff are kept up to date with the latest guidance.

The school promotes care and support for pupils at all times. Leaders take steps to ensure that vulnerable pupils and families get the help they need, both in school

and beyond. They work closely with carers of children looked after, who appreciate the understanding shown to their child. Well-trained staff provide additional support to develop pupils' social and emotional skills. Parents of pupils who access this support say it has successfully developed their children's confidence. Leaders have also strengthened the measures they take to reduce absence, which has resulted in improved attendance.

Governors check that the school's curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. Pupils say they feel safe in school and are confident that bullying in school is very rare. They have worked with school staff to develop ways to identify and deal with different types of behaviour, including bullying. Even the youngest pupils know what to do if someone upsets them, and they trust staff to sort out their concerns.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including: the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements; the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; pupils' achievement in mathematics; and the effectiveness of the teaching of reading.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils has historically been lower than that of other pupils. Leaders are determined to diminish these differences. They have used additional funding to increase staffing to provide extra teaching where it is needed. Where current disadvantaged pupils are working at or above the level the school expects for their age, their work shows the same good progress. However, work is not consistently well matched for the small number of pupils who work below this level, either in English or mathematics. Pupils' workbooks show that some barriers to learning are not identified quickly or addressed precisely enough to result in rapid progress.
- There are a small minority of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Current pupils are making variable progress, although they are becoming more independent in their learning. Teaching does not consistently take into account each pupil's individual starting point, or identify and meet specific learning needs. Leaders are aware that the progress of a few pupils is too slow, particularly for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders are refining the way in which they support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so that all pupils make rapid progress.
- Effective teaching and learning have resulted in key stage 1 outcomes that are above the national average. Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have not been as strong in recent years because pupils have not always retained their earlier learning when tackling the challenging demands of the curriculum.
- Current pupils' outcomes in mathematics are improving as a result of the strategies that leaders have introduced. Pupils increasingly use apparatus and images to explore how mathematical ideas work and so deepen their understanding. Teachers also encourage pupils to develop their fluency and

reasoning by explaining their mathematical thinking to others. Consequently, current key stage 2 pupils are more adept at problem solving, although there are still a few gaps in fluency. For example, some pupils lack a quick recall of multiplication tables. Where teaching is most successful, teachers have a detailed understanding of each pupil's abilities and skilfully support them to embed new skills.

- Pupils have become increasingly independent in their learning and carefully check their own work. In our classroom visits, we saw how their strategies are particularly successful in mathematics. Nevertheless, pupils recognise when they need to seek more guidance and teachers are readily at hand. In one classroom, we saw one pupil learning from an 'expert' pupil who had already mastered the work and was ready for the challenge of explaining it to a classmate.
- The school provides consistently strong support for reading. Right from the start, Reception pupils develop positive attitudes towards reading. Teachers model phonics effectively and move pupils on quickly to deepen their reading comprehension. Teachers introduce pupils to rich and challenging books that they would not necessarily choose to read by themselves. Consequently, pupils develop a love of literature and enjoy talking about the stories they have read.
- There are strong links between reading and writing. Pupils learn to write like authors because they consider the purpose and audience for each piece of writing. This helps them to write with fluency. Pupils' use of well-chosen and challenging vocabulary supports them in making their writing interesting to the reader. A few lower-attaining pupils do not make good progress because support to develop their writing skills is not consistently well matched to their needs.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recent improvements to teaching and learning in mathematics are embedded and developed to improve pupils' progress and attainment
- teaching more precisely addresses the needs of lower-attaining pupils, including those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, enabling them to more rapidly overcome barriers to learning.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Portsmouth, 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, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, other staff with significant responsibilities and seven governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke to a representative of the local authority and also talked to pupils in key stages 1 and 2. I observed learning in seven classes with you and the deputy headteacher, and observed pupils' play at breaktime. I scrutinised a sample of pupils' work in English and mathematics. I considered 91 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 76 written comments and I met a number of parents at the start of the school day. I took into account the views of 19 members of the school's staff who responded to the online survey and one written response. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and I analysed a range of school documentation, including: information about pupils' achievement; the school improvement plan; minutes of the governing body's meetings; the single central record of recruitment checks; and safeguarding policies and procedures.