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Mrs Sarah Harvey
Acting Headteacher
Bolney C of E Primary School
Church Lane
Bolney
Hayward's Heath
RH17 5QP

Dear Mrs Harvey

Short inspection of Bolney C of E Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 December 2015, 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 July 2011.

This school continues to be good.

You have led and managed the school well, and with great personal commitment, during the interregnum between substantive headteachers. You have been helpfully supported by an experienced headteacher from another church school. You have communicated thoroughly and purposefully with staff, parents, pupils, church and community. Staff morale is very high. The school has advanced well in this period. You have ensured that staff performance management is carried out effectively, with rigour and in a timely way. You have identified appropriate areas for future school improvement and have begun useful work on these. For example, the role and deployment of teaching assistants have been helpfully developed and staff have done valuable work on improving the way that pupils' progress is assessed. However, it is not clear what you expect pupils to be able to understand or do better as a result of these improvements. This makes it hard to evaluate fully the impact of these changes.

The school has worked effectively to meet the recommendations from the previous inspection. English and mathematics are both well taught, and pupils attain equally well in all aspects of these subjects in Key Stages 1 and 2. There have been recent notable improvements in the school's results in the Year 1 phonics screening check, which determines how well pupils link letters and sounds, and in the national assessments at the end of Reception Year. In all national assessments, the school's results are above average.

Despite this, a number of parents express some concern about the level of progress being made by their children. Some pupils also feel that they are not always challenged in their learning. One of the things that I clearly noted about the pupils is how lively and enquiring their minds are and how quick on the uptake they are. This reflects the fact that their attainment is high when they first join the school, which makes it particularly necessary for the school to ensure that pupils are always challenged well. When we visited lessons and activities together, there were several occasions when, although the work being done was good, it could have been even more demanding, with a still higher standard expected of pupils. For example, while the Reception and Year 1 teaching of phonics was effective, there were some opportunities missed to challenge the pupils further and move their learning forward even more quickly. We visited a practice for the carol service in the church. The Key Stage 2 pupils sang well, showing the capability to undertake a more demanding repertoire than was in fact required of them.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The school site is appropriately secure and this is checked well by staff. Proper checks on staff and other adults are made when they are recruited. These are well recorded and updated. All staff are appropriately trained in child protection procedures and know what to do in different eventualities. Pupils feel safe, secure and well looked after. They are clear about how they should keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.

Inspection findings

- Pupils enjoy being in their school. They attend well, with little absence. They understand the school's well-publicised values. Their behaviour is very good. They are polite, kind and very respectful to each other. Pupils really enjoy playing imaginatively together in the well-developed outdoor areas. In lessons, they concentrate well and are very keen to find things out for themselves. However, just occasionally these positive attitudes lapse when lessons lose some interest or challenge.
- Many pupils take on real responsibility, for example, by becoming school councillors. These responsibilities help pupils to understand fundamental British values, such as tolerance and democracy. Older pupils were keen to talk about a visit they made to the Houses of Parliament. The school's Christian foundation and the further developing religious education curriculum help pupils to understand the importance of faith to their lives and those of others.
- Pupils read and write well. In a Years 5 and 6 lesson, pupils worked hard and enjoyed drafting and redrafting an extended piece of writing. The quality and content of their work were both good. Generally, they used punctuation and spelling rules correctly. In some cases, their handwriting was a little untidy.
- Pupils' mathematical development is good. Teachers explain new concepts clearly and systematically.

- The needs of the small number of pupils entitled to the support of pupil premium funding are well known to staff. The money is spent appropriately and the pupils achieve well.
- Children in Reception enjoy opportunities to make appropriate choices about their learning, indoors and outdoors, suitably guided by adults. Useful recent staff training in early years has improved practice and helped to ensure that the children make good progress.
- Pupils with disabilities or special educational needs achieve well. The school assesses their needs thoroughly and supports their learning, alongside their classmates, effectively.
- Pupils enjoy a broad curriculum. They have many opportunities to participate in competitive sport. The school is rightly beginning to develop the staff in their roles as leaders of subjects. This is important work, and needs to go further. Sometimes pupils could be challenged more highly and learn more deeply, especially in subjects other than English and mathematics. The school has made helpful links with other schools to support this work.
- The school has useful contacts with the local authority and diocese. These help to sustain the good standard of work in the school. External support has been particularly valuable at a time of change in headship.
- The school evaluates itself accurately. The honest evaluations help you to identify appropriate areas for further improvement. Clear targets are not, however, identified in each of these areas for raising the outcomes for pupils. In discussions, you recognise how important such targets should be to lifting further the school's expectations of all that pupils can achieve.
- The governing body is appropriately organised. Its members know the school well. Governors ask robust, strategic questions of the school's leaders. They ensure that key matters such as pupil safeguarding and staff pay progression are correctly managed.
- Parents are generally pleased with the school. However, some expressed concerns about homework and there being too little communication and information from the school. The school introduced a new system of learning journals recently, which includes home learning, without significant consultation.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- expectations of pupils and the quality of provision are consistently as high as they can be right across the curriculum and in all areas of activity, so that pupils' responses and outcomes are outstanding
- leadership of all subjects is improved further, and precise, demanding targets for a wide range of outcomes for pupils are placed within the school improvement plan as the key measure of success.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Chichester, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for West Sussex County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Robin Hammerton
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I visited lessons in all four classes in the school, jointly with the acting headteacher. I looked at pupils' work and held discussions with pupils. I observed at playtimes. I met with the acting headteacher, members of staff and governors. I also met a representative of the local authority, who is the headteacher designate. I took account of the 60 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also considered responses from members of staff and pupils to their confidential online questionnaires. I evaluated documents, including school development plans, evaluations, information about pupils' progress and minutes of meetings.