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Mrs K Marks
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Marks

Short inspection of Frenchay Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 March 2019, 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 September 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since the previous inspection, the school has gone through several staff changes, including across positions of leadership. In addition, plans are underway to expand the school as it prepares to move to a new site nearby. This will triple the size of the school. In preparation for this, you are ensuring that middle leaders are well-placed to be able to share and implement the school's vision with a much larger staff team who will be new to post.

You have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's performance. You conduct robust monitoring to make sure standards are high as well as providing support for staff. You work closely with local schools to share best practice and to check accuracy of assessments. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the support they receive from school leaders.

You place a strong emphasis on the importance of community across the school, particularly as you prepare pupils for the transition to a larger school. The school's 'koinonia' approach is at the heart of the school. 'Koinonia', meaning 'a gift jointly contributed', captures how every pupil and member of staff contributes to the school. As we visited each classroom, it became clear that you have an astute understanding of each pupil. Parents who contributed to the online survey, Parent View, are in no doubt that pupils are safe and happy in school. An indication of this is how well pupils attend school. Over time, pupils' absence and persistent absence have been consistently lower than national averages.

Governors have a clear and in-depth understanding of how well the school is performing. They have adopted an innovative approach to governance which has been highly effective. Each governor takes a responsibility for an aspect of the school's development plan and carries out activity and analysis against their designated focus. Governors share their detailed findings with the rest of the governing body so that there is a strong collective understanding. This understanding means that they are well-placed to hold leaders to account and can ask probing, relevant questions. Consequently, governors have a clear and accurate evaluation of the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure that recruitment procedures are robust and that only those who are suitable to work with children are considered for employment. Staff record checks on the school's single central record. Once employed, staff complete a thorough induction so they are fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. You make sure that ongoing training keeps staff up to date with current issues as well as making sure they access training specific to their roles, for example paediatric first aid training.

Staff are well placed to recognise concerns about pupils, should they arise. You ensure that these concerns are well recorded and form a detailed chronology of events. This means you are well placed to take proportionate action. Together, we checked pupils' records and these show that your interventions have been timely and that you have sought external support at appropriate times. As a result, pupils are safe.

Inspection findings

- First, I considered how leaders have brought about steady and sustained improvements in writing. Pupils' progress across key stage 2 moved from significantly below national averages in 2015 to significantly above national averages in 2018. In addition, the proportions of pupils working at expectations for their age and the higher standard have been consistently above national averages by the end of key stage 2.
- Leaders have been effective in promoting writing across the school. Pupils engage well in writing and their books demonstrate pride and care in presentation. Pupils have wide-ranging opportunities to write across a range of genre, both fiction and non-fiction. As a result, most pupils' books demonstrate strong progress. However, in some parts of the school pupils progress less well. This occurs when teachers do not closely consider what pupils already know about a genre, and sequences of learning are not made clear. Leaders acknowledge the need to refine the approach to the teaching of writing so that all teachers are familiar with the chosen approach and pupils make stronger progress from their starting points.

- Second, I considered how leaders' actions are having an impact on pupils' progress in mathematics so that a greater proportion of pupils across the school are working at the higher standard.
- The school's mathematics curriculum is embedded across the school. Teachers are following leaders' intended approach and pupils' progression from class to class is evident. Teachers use high-quality questioning to probe pupils' understanding and set aspirational challenges for pupils to complete. In mixed-aged classes, teachers closely consider the national curriculum requirements when setting activities for pupils to complete. Pupils are positive about the challenges provided and set about solving them with confidence and enthusiasm.
- You have put great emphasis on ensuring that pupils access challenging activities during mathematics lessons and this is having a good impact. Teachers move pupils on to more difficult work as soon as they feel they are ready. Leaders monitor pupils' progress closely and act swiftly should progress slow in any way. On occasion, the quality of activities that teachers provide pupils varies. This restricts pupils' understanding when reasoning and problem-solving.
- Finally, I considered how well the early years provision prepares children, particularly boys, for key stage 1. In 2018, the proportion of boys working at expectations for their age was less than that of girls, mainly in reading, writing and moving and handling.
- Activities in the early years provision are carefully chosen to promote children's progress. There are opportunities for children to develop their fine motor skills and pencil control, which is considered under the moving and handling aspect of the early years foundation stage. Children access daily phonic sessions which are of high quality and provide opportunities for children to practise applying sounds in their own writing. Leaders have prioritised further developing the quality of the continuous provision so that children have more high-quality opportunities to independently develop their knowledge and understanding.
- Children enter the school with a broad range of different starting points. Until recently, children's writing books did not reflect these differences. Information about what children could already do was not informing activities. As a result, children were completing activities that were occasionally too easy. However, there is evidence of greater challenge in recent months.
- There is a wealth of writing evidence to support the teacher's assessments of what children know, can do and understand. However, this is resulting in unnecessary workload. Staff currently keep evidence of children's progress using three different methods and leaders acknowledge that this is not a good use of staff time. Children's writing books are of a high standard. They demonstrate an increasing confidence and awareness of sounds and the letters that represent them. As a result, children attempt to spell more complicated words with greater success.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all pupils have high-quality opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving knowledge so that pupils progress further and a greater proportion are working at the higher standard in mathematics
- the teaching of writing is consistently embedded across the school and greater considers pupils' starting points, including in the early years.

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 South Gloucestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nathan Kemp
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I conducted all activities alongside either the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. At the beginning of the inspection, I met with leaders to discuss school improvement priorities and their evaluation of the school's performance. We then made visits to lessons. I met with the subject leaders for writing and mathematics while we scrutinised pupils' writing and mathematics books. I also met with the designated leader and deputy designated leader for safeguarding and three representatives from the governing body.

I looked at a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's self-evaluation and discussed the school's current improvement priorities. Additionally, we scrutinised various safeguarding records, including leaders' records of concerns about pupils' well-being. I took account of 54 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and 4 responses to the staff survey.