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Mrs S Allen
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Allen

Short inspection of Frenchay Church of England School

Following my visit to the school on Tuesday 22 September 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 March 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

- Despite a significant change in staffing, you have continued to build on the school's strengths and tackled the areas that were identified at the last inspection as needing improvement. At the same time, you have appointed new senior and middle leaders who have quickly galvanised teachers into a team who share the ethos of this close, friendly and very caring school. The culture fully reflects the school's values of 'learn, enjoy, care, achieve together'. You are very well supported and rigorously challenged by your astute governing body, which has a clear vision and direction for the school.
- The last inspection report identified the need to make better use of the school's information on the progress made by the more-able pupils. The robust systems you now have in place to track pupils' progress are pivotal to the good-quality education provided by the school. By carefully checking how well individuals are progressing, you are able to accurately identify those who need extra challenge in their learning. This is ensuring that more-able pupils make better progress. In addition, the creative challenges set for all pupils to do at home enable individuals to excel at what they do best. These activities deepen their knowledge while

extending their range of skills. This is because not only do the pupils have to research tasks, they are also required to consider ways to present their findings back in school.

- Since the last inspection, you have improved the effectiveness of communication between home and school. This has been successfully achieved by publishing more frequent newsletters and using mobile phone texts to make contact with parents. Parents say how much they appreciate this. Parent workshops are set up to demonstrate how key skills are taught and these are helping parents to support their children's learning. Regular meetings with the parent council, made up from representatives from each class, ensure that parents are kept well-informed of any issues arising. You also hear their views on aspects of school life and can reassure them on matters which may be of concern to other parents. For example, comments from parents on the format of the school's reports on their children's progress were instrumental in the positive changes which were made. The production of a welcome pack and handbook for parents new to the school has been well received. Parents value the provision of childcare before and after school and appreciate the advice given to them by the specialist adviser who is employed across the local cluster of schools. All these improvements have resulted in closer working relationships between home and school, which supports the pupils' outcomes well. As one parent commented online, 'I wouldn't change anything about the school. It achieves a lovely mix of friendliness and learning in a village that the school is very much part of.'

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders and managers place the highest priority on the safeguarding of all pupils. The culture of safety and security within the school is tangible and it is clear that it is an integral part of everyday life for all who work and learn here. All staff have been trained and receive up-to-date bulletins on keeping their pupils safe. You and your governors fully understand how to recruit safely and this ensures that all staff are carefully vetted prior to employment.

Controversial issues are not shirked. Staff have recently undertaken training on the government's 'Prevent' strategy, to avoid radicalisation, and you have a clear understanding of the need to protect pupils against all possible risks. For example, you and your staff make sure that the pupils understand the dangers they may encounter when using the internet or their mobile phone. In your sensitive and in-depth approach to teaching British values, you make sure that the pupils know who to go to for help or advice. Pupils report that their school is a safe place to be.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. There is a rigour to the way that any concerns are followed up so that the risk of harm is minimised.

Inspection findings

- Pupils' reading skills remain a strong feature across the school. The school's library helps to promote pupils' enjoyment of reading. Pupils are provided with a range of texts that extend their choice of reading. They use the library coding system confidently to locate reference books and research information. As a result, pupils read a range of books confidently by the time they leave the school.
- During the past academic year, you recognised that pupils were not doing as well in mathematics across Key Stage 2. This was because they lacked the confidence and skills to use mental calculations to fully secure their understanding. Teachers have concentrated on developing these skills in class and built the pupils' confidence by giving them mental mathematics activities to practise at home. As a result, outcomes in mathematics for pupils across all year groups in Key Stage 2 have improved. You have accurately identified the need to develop this strategy in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils relish the learning opportunities and challenges they experience through the wide range of exciting subjects on offer across the curriculum. For example, by reading together the novel about the 'Street Child', Year 5 and 6 pupils are learning about aspects of life in Victorian England. The same novel is also being used as a way to consider the current plight of refugees in Europe.
- Recent training has highlighted a need for teachers to identify how much pupils know, understand and can do before they embark on a new curriculum theme. You have rightly identified that the curriculum should provide wider opportunities for pupils to improve their skills when they write for different purposes, such as letter writing, narrative or creative work. You are also very clear that pupils need to improve their grammar and spell with greater accuracy.
- Parents are very appreciative of the way in which you relentlessly strive to ensure that every pupil 'reaches their full potential'. Most parents 'would not hesitate to recommend this school to other parents'. Those who have children who are disabled or have special educational needs particularly appreciate the nurturing ethos of the school. A range of successful approaches is used to support disadvantaged pupils and those whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. For example, teachers are released from their class on a weekly basis so that they can have one-to-one sessions with those pupils who need to gain confidence and build up their self-esteem. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved markedly due to your tenacity in following up any absence from school.
- Pupils explain that their school is a very happy place where they feel safe and secure. They take pride in the way they wear their uniforms. They are eager learners who listen attentively and contribute confidently in lessons. They

work hard, tasks are presented very neatly in their books and they enjoy the challenges that their teachers set. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the different subjects they study and describe the memorable visits they have had out of school to enhance their class work. They find the comments that their teachers make in their books help them consolidate their learning and make progress. Talking to their classmates about their work also helps them clarify new knowledge and skills. In particular, older pupils enjoy marking each other's work and learning from their mistakes. These enthusiastic contributions from pupils support their strong outcomes.

- Despite the restricted space on the school site, pupils have access to a wealth of extra activities which support their personal development and well-being. By using sports funding to employ specialist physical education coaches, the number of pupils now engaged in after-school clubs and activities is impressive. This has increased pupils' involvement in local competitive sport, including individuals playing at county level. Pupils welcome the opportunity to learn to play musical instruments within their classrooms. The end-of-term concerts organised to showcase pupils' musical performance skills are much enjoyed by all members of the school community.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- pupils' prior knowledge is checked before they embark on a new curriculum theme so that they can be provided with relevant challenges
- more opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their grammar skills and write for different purposes
- pupils in Key Stage 1 develop their confidence in using mental calculations to help them deepen their knowledge, understanding and application of their mathematical skills.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and we discussed the school's self-evaluation, information about the progress pupils were making and improvements since the last inspection. I also held discussions with your interim deputy headteacher, subject leaders, a group of four governors and a representative from the local authority. I accompanied you on visits to lessons and we looked at some pupils' books together. I met with a group of pupils and talked to some parents at the end of the school day. I looked at the survey results from Parent View and considered the comments that had been placed on this website by parents.