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Denise Gibbs-Naguar
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Gibbs-Naguar

Short inspection of Hunton Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 July 2016, 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 2011.

This school continues to be good.

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

Since then there have been some significant changes, including your appointment as headteacher in September 2013. You have a clear vision and you are supported by an effective leadership team and knowledgeable governing body. Enabling pupils to do their best is at the heart of everything you do. To achieve this, you have rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning. This is reaping rewards, as pupils continue to make good and sometimes better progress. You have high expectations of staff and pupils. As a result, the school continues to improve under your leadership.

The school's Christian ethos and core values of compassion, forgiveness and thankfulness are evident in the positive relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils feel well cared for and supported by staff. Pupils are proud of their school and their work. They enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. Pupils' attendance, including for those who are disadvantaged and who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, has improved to be in line with national figures.

The previous report directed the school to improve the proportion of pupils reaching expected levels in English and mathematics and to improve pupils' spelling and

punctuation. In addition, leaders were recommended to improve the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters and words make) and reading skills for lower-attaining pupils to help their writing skills. Since the last inspection, leaders have addressed each of these areas effectively so that none now remain as areas for improvement. For example, the proportion of pupils in year 1 reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils in key stage 1 achieving the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics has improved to be well above national figures in 2015.

You and your leadership team skilfully monitor and support colleagues to make sure pupils receive consistently good teaching. Where there are concerns about the quality of teaching you are quick to intervene, provide support, and then check that improvements are being maintained. Teachers are given clear pointers for how to improve their practice. You have established effective and growing links with other schools, including a teaching school, so that staff have opportunities to see and share good practice.

You have rightly recognised that pupils' skills in mathematics are not developed well enough, especially in key stage 1 and sometimes this hampers pupils' progress and understanding as they move through the school. You have reviewed and refined the way mathematics is taught so that pupils have time to practise and consolidate their learning. Two teachers have recently been awarded specialist teacher of education status for mathematics by the Department for Education and their expert knowledge is being used effectively to improve mathematics teaching across the school. You and governors recognise that there needs to be more effective communication with parents about future events, changes to school procedures and concerns that are raised.

Safeguarding is effective.

All necessary checks are undertaken to ensure that those who work with pupils in the school are fit to do so. Procedures around recruitment are equally secure and rigorous. Good and regular training for staff in all aspects of safeguarding is provided, including for those who join mid-year. All relevant policies are in place and are maintained and up to date. Pupils understand how to stay safe on the internet and in the company of strangers as a result of effective teaching in lessons and assemblies. Records are detailed and demonstrate how work with external agencies actively supports pupils who may be at risk. Pupils who spoke to me said they felt listened to and safe. The majority of parents who responded to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire) feel their children are well cared for and safe in the school.

Inspection findings

- You and governors are focused in your determination to bring about improvement across all areas of the school. Together, you have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Your robust and accurate analysis of the school's performance and the subsequent actions

you have taken have led to improvements in teaching and learning.

- Governors are a conscientious and committed group who provide an effective level of support and challenge to leaders. They know the school well, because they receive accurate information from leaders and visit the school frequently to see for themselves the impact of leaders' actions.
- The special educational needs coordinator has effectively reviewed and refined this aspect of the school's provision since she joined the school 18 months ago. As a result, pupils' needs are more precisely and quickly identified and met through a wide range of support. As a result, these pupils are making better progress.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start because the quality of the provision is high. The proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development has risen sharply in the last three years and is now well above the national average. Staff assess children's progress accurately and use this information carefully to plan next steps in learning.
- Leaders have reviewed and refined the way phonics and reading skills are taught across the school. Additionally, expectations have been raised for how often pupils should read at school and at home. Pupils are proud of their reading records that show their progress. As a result, pupils, including those of lower ability or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, read fluently and with meaning.
- Better teaching of reading skills is helping pupils, including those who are lower attainers, to write accurately and creatively. As a result, pupils' writing is a strength of the school. Work in pupils' books shows the focus on improving pupils' accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar is bearing fruit.
- In key stage 1 standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen over the last three years, and in 2015 were significantly above those found nationally.
- Pupils make good progress in key stage 2, particularly in reading and writing. In 2015 the proportion of pupils achieving the highest levels were well above average. While pupils' outcomes in mathematics are solidly good, they are generally not as strong as in reading and writing. Leaders recognise that pupils need to be given time and opportunity to practise and consolidate their skills, especially in applying what they know to solve problems.
- National curriculum test results for current Year 6 pupils show the proportions achieving the expected standard in reading, writing, mathematics and spelling, punctuation and grammar are well above those published for pupils nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with lower attainment make good progress as a result of determined efforts by staff and leaders. Close monitoring of the progress of individual pupils, effective use of assessment and timely support for those in danger of falling behind, mean these pupils make similar progress to their classmates.
- Teachers provide helpful and constructive feedback to pupils. Pupils use these comments in meaningful ways to improve their work and are clear what their next steps to achieve success are.

- The local authority has a good knowledge of the school. It has provided valuable support, particularly to develop leadership capacity across the school.
- Through their monitoring, leaders have identified that some staff could check and challenge pupils' learning more effectively through better-quality questioning. From my visits to classrooms, it was possible to see where this practice was particularly strong and where it was less well developed. Leaders have already identified this as an area for development.
- Some parents feel that leaders do not communicate effectively enough with them about changes to school procedures, upcoming events or any concerns they might have about their children's education.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff improve their questioning so it checks and challenges pupils' thinking effectively
- leaders communicate more effectively with parents about changes to procedure and any concerns parents raise
- pupils are given sufficient opportunities to practise and consolidate their problem-solving skills in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Lisa Moore
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you; the special educational needs coordinator; a group of pupils; and members of the governing body, including the chair. I met with a representative of the local authority. I spoke with parents at the start of the day and with pupils at different times during the inspection, including breaktime. I listened to pupils from Years 2, 3 and 4 read. I looked at a range of pupils' work in their books. I considered the 41 responses to Parent View, the 30 comments provided by text message and a parental letter. I visited a number of classrooms with you to speak to pupils, look at their work and observe their learning. I evaluated a range of documents, including information on pupils' progress, attendance and safeguarding records. During this inspection, the majority of pupils in Years 5 and 6 were out of school on a residential trip.