

23 April 2018

Mrs Michelle Kelly  
Executive Headteacher  
Churcham Primary School  
Churcham  
Gloucester  
Gloucestershire  
GL2 8BD

Dear Mrs Kelly

### **Short inspection of Churcham Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 2018, 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 November 2013.

### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are dedicated to improving the school and lead with drive and commitment. You carefully evaluate all aspects of the school's provision, which helps you to identify accurately the key priorities and create well-focused improvement plans. Staff feel respected and are proud to be part of the school. They welcome the support that you provide to develop their professional practice in order to raise standards.

Good teaching ensures that children consistently achieve well in the early years and at the end of key stage 1. At the previous inspection, phonics achievement was not good enough, but has improved more recently, particularly by the end of Year 2. Over time, effective teaching has led to a high proportion of pupils achieving expected and higher standards in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2. You have accurately identified that too few pupils achieve expected or higher standards in mathematics. Consequently, you have taken decisive action and sought the expertise of a local authority adviser to support you to raise standards of teaching. This is improving pupils' skills in mathematics. As a result, most current pupils are making steady progress to achieve the standards expected of them, and several pupils are making strong progress. However, a few pupils, including pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, are not making sufficient progress to catch up and reach standards expected for their age.

Pupils are happy, polite and welcoming. They said that they enjoy school because it

is 'amazing' and 'teachers make learning fun'. Pupils are sociable and keen to talk about their learning. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are pleased with the school. They typically comment, 'This is a great school ... I highly recommend it', and 'I am really happy with the school ... My child is challenged well.' Parents also spoke favourably of the support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Governors, some of whom are new to their roles, are committed to supporting school improvement. They make the most of opportunities to work with you, other leaders and your local authority adviser. This helps them to evaluate the success of improvements to teaching and learning.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school is a happy and caring environment. All adults in the school know they have a responsibility for keeping pupils safe and form positive and respectful relationships with them. Adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils respect the school's rules, because they are keen to learn. As a result, pupils listen carefully and follow instructions sensibly. Pupils said that that poor behaviour is rare but they are confident that any issues would be swiftly resolved. A parent confirmed this, commenting, 'The behaviour rules work really well for my child.'

You provide staff with appropriate and timely updates to training, so that they know what to do if they believe that a pupil might be at risk. You log details of any concerns and keep secure records. You do not hesitate to contact outside agencies for advice and support. This helps you to ensure that you are providing families with the help they need.

You maintain well-organised and detailed records of the checks you carry out to confirm that staff are safe to work with children. There are well-understood procedures for keeping pupils safe in a range of situations, such as when they are on trips or if they require first aid. You work tirelessly to encourage pupils to attend regularly, which makes a positive difference for most pupils.

### **Inspection findings**

- We agreed that my first line of enquiry would investigate what actions you have taken to improve phonics teaching, because achievement over time has not been good enough. You have improved the consistency of the teaching of phonics, and teaching now meets pupils' needs well. Adults model learning effectively, and pupils enjoy rehearsing and applying their phonics skills to read and write accurately. Your latest assessment information shows that pupils are making effective progress. They persevere when they find reading tricky and recognise when they have made mistakes. This helps them to correct themselves.
- Alongside discrete phonics sessions, you have provided pupils with reading opportunities, which help them to apply sounds they have been practising. Pupils enjoy reading regularly, at home and in school. Their secure understanding of phonics helps them to read well. Pupils talk confidently about events in stories

and can give reasons for characters' actions. Teachers award stickers and certificates, which inspire pupils to read often.

- My second line of enquiry was to determine how well you are improving the teaching of mathematics, particularly in key stage 2. This is because too few pupils achieve the expected or higher standards of the national curriculum at the end of the key stage. You have correctly identified this as a priority for the school and have sought the support of the local authority adviser. You and other leaders, including governors, work closely with the adviser to improve mathematics teaching. As a result of working on 'do it, twist it and solve it' activities in mathematics, pupils are now able to practise, apply and consolidate their mathematics skills. For example, older pupils can confidently explain how to convert kilograms into grams and then use this information to solve problems.
- You and other leaders routinely monitor the effectiveness of teaching, which helps you to swiftly intervene when teaching needs to improve. You use the information from your monitoring of teaching to help staff to improve, so that pupils make better progress. Effective teaching of current pupils ensures that most pupils are making sufficient progress to reach the standards expected of them. A good proportion of pupils, including the most able pupils, are making accelerated progress and acquiring greater depth in their learning. However, a few pupils are falling behind.
- My third line of enquiry was to establish how effectively you support disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. You are committed to working closely with parents and teachers to assist pupils who need individually planned support. Parents speak favourably about the help you provide. Typical comments include, 'When my child needed extra help, it was identified straight away and is really making a difference.' You work closely with the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), who has a good understanding of pupils' needs. However, a minority of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are still not making enough progress to reach the standards expected for their age. You have made disadvantaged pupils a priority, which has helped you to provide pupils with additional teaching. This is having a positive impact, and most pupils are now making effective progress.
- My final line of enquiry was to check how well leaders and governors reduce higher absence for a minority of pupils who do not attend regularly. You are determined to reduce absence and you regularly communicate with parents to explain the importance of regular attendance. You relentlessly pursue the reasons for absence and provide attractive incentives, such as muffins and vouchers to motivate pupils to attend. This is having a positive impact and the attendance of the majority of pupils is improving. However, despite your efforts, a small minority of pupils are still frequently absent, and this is adversely affecting their progress.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils who need to catch up, including pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities ,

receive the help they need to enable them to make consistently strong progress

- teaching improves so that pupils routinely reach the standards expected of them, particularly in mathematics, and more pupils, including the most able pupils, reach higher standards
- the proportion of pupils who are frequently absent further reduces towards national averages.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Beeks  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, you and I carried out most of the inspection activities together. We discussed your school improvement priorities and your self-evaluation. We reviewed the school's most recent assessment information. I scrutinised the school's single central record, and we discussed your arrangements for keeping pupils safe. Together, we reviewed phonics teaching and learning in a mixed class of Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. We also looked at mathematics learning and reviewed books in the mixed class of Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 pupils.

I held separate meetings with subject leaders and your local authority adviser. I also met with the chair and vice chair of governors, both of whom have been recently appointed to these roles.

I spoke to pupils at various points during the day and listened to readers from Year 1 and Year 2. I met several parents informally at the start of the school day, in order to gain their views of the school. I also considered six responses to the online survey, Parent View, along with three additional free-text comments. I reviewed three responses to the online staff questionnaire.