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Miss Judith Terrell  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Terrell

### **Short inspection of Shellingford Church of England (Voluntary Aided) School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 2017, 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 May 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have created a culture where all pupils are valued and cared for well. The Christian ethos of the school has strong links to your four core values – 'creativity, respect, spirituality and belonging'. Staff describe the school as 'a special place' and say that strong teamwork has helped the school to continue to improve. Pupils like the links that the school has with the church and think that the school is a welcoming place.

You have strengthened the teaching by providing high-quality support to your staff. As a result, pupils across the school make good progress in their learning. Staff value the useful training they have received, which they believe has improved how they teach writing and mathematics. Your leaders' work to develop a culture in lessons where it is fine for pupils to make mistakes and where hard work is respected has increased pupils' confidence. This culture has also helped to improve pupils' outcomes. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support to help them to improve their work in reading, writing and mathematics. The range of approaches in the curriculum is a strength of the school and pupils enjoy the interesting themes that they learn about. Pupils now have more pride in their work because teachers have encouraged them to improve their presentation. Pupils are keen to learn and behaviour is good. Pupils have a strong understanding of the school's core values and put these into

practice in lessons and around the school by working and playing well together.

The last inspection recognised the school's many strengths, particularly the harmonious relationships between pupils and staff. It also identified a need to encourage pupils to take greater care in their writing and their presentation in all subjects. Another recommendation was for teachers' planning to take more account of pupils' needs, so that all of them could work to achieve their full potential. Leaders have addressed these areas effectively so that:

- pupils now take more care in their writing, and presentation across all subjects has improved
- teachers now use assessment information more effectively to plan work that focuses on what the pupils need to learn.

You and your governors have an ambitious vision which focuses on all pupils achieving equally well, regardless of their prior attainment. You have identified the correct key priorities to improve the school further. You and your subject leaders are taking the right action to address these priorities. You know that pupils will learn better if they have the confidence to take risks and try hard. You and your leaders have already started to work on this by focusing on creating a positive learning environment.

However, the most able pupils and those with the potential to achieve higher standards need to be stretched and challenged more to help them make rapid progress. Pupils with low starting points would also benefit from being given more specific guidance and support in lessons. The support you give these pupils needs to focus on their next steps in learning to help them to catch up.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Pupils' safety is at the forefront of everything that the school does. Pupils feel safe and parents feel that the school looks after their children well. The school's curriculum includes a range of different opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. Pupils know how to use the internet safely and have also been taught about road safety. They behave sensibly in lessons and around the school. They are supervised well during breaks where they play together sensibly and safely.

Staff receive regular and useful training in safeguarding. They discuss pupils' safety and the needs of vulnerable children in weekly staff meetings. Leaders take swift action to follow up on any concerns raised by staff. The school works effectively with external agencies when necessary. Leaders, including governors, monitor safeguarding arrangements robustly to ensure that the correct procedures are being followed. Leaders carry out an annual safeguarding audit which highlighted strengths in practice last year. Governors monitor health and safety arrangements to ensure that the site and grounds are safe.

## Inspection findings

- We discussed the lines of enquiry for the day together and agreed to focus on the following aspects: the effectiveness of leaders in creating a strong culture of safeguarding across the school to keep pupils safe; how well leaders have improved writing; how well leaders ensure that pupils make good or accelerated progress; how well leaders prepare pupils for their next steps in education and for life in modern Britain and how effectively leaders have improved the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
- Since the last inspection pupils' writing has improved. Pupils now have greater pride in their work and present their written work well across a range of subjects. From a young age, children are taught the skills needed to develop correct letter formation. Children use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them write simple words. Pupils across key stage 1 and key stage 2 are now writing at greater length, using more advanced vocabulary and are improving their use of correct grammar. As a result, pupils make good progress in writing. However, accuracy in spelling still requires further improvement for many pupils. Leaders, including governors, have monitored the improvements in writing effectively.
- Leaders ensure that the majority of pupils achieve the standards required for their age. Some pupils are achieving the higher standard, particularly in mathematics. The curriculum is engaging and the pupils enjoy the learning themes. However, the most able pupils and those who have potential to produce work of a higher standard are not always stretched and challenged enough, so that they can make rapid progress. Some pupils with low starting points need additional support and guidance in their lessons to help them to catch up.
- There is a strong Christian ethos in the school which focuses on core values. Diversity is celebrated in the religious education curriculum and pupils have a good understanding of other faiths, such as Judaism and Islam. Pupils respect each other, listen well to each other's ideas and work and play happily together. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Published outcomes show that pupils are making good progress and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Leaders' development of a culture where pupils know how best to learn has enabled them to be more confident when tackling new learning.
- Teachers have had high-quality training which has improved their teaching, particularly in writing and mathematics. Your leaders have supported teachers well to ensure that pupils continue to make good progress across a range of subjects. Mathematics is taught systematically through the introduction of a new teaching programme, which has helped pupils to master mathematics in greater depth. Leaders, including governors, have monitored teaching effectively to sustain improvements.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils, and those with potential to achieve higher standards, are stretched and challenged sufficiently to make rapid progress across a range of subjects
- pupils from low starting points are given greater guidance and support with their learning to help them to catch up.

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

Yours sincerely

Mo Galway  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, other leaders, teachers, pupils, members of the governing body and your independent school improvement adviser. I also spoke to a representative of the Diocese of Oxford on the telephone. With you, I visited all four classes and scrutinised a wide range of pupils' work. I took account of 13 staff and 31 pupil responses to the online questionnaires. I also considered 39 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 34 responses to the school's own parent questionnaire from March 2016. I observed pupils' behaviour at break and around the school. I spoke to a number of parents at the beginning of the school day. I analysed a range of the school's documentation including information about pupils' achievement, the school's raising achievement plan and a range of policies and procedures including those for safeguarding. We discussed your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness.