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Mr Duncan Gordon
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Dear Mr Gordon

Short inspection of Cheddon Fitzpaine Church School

Following my visit to the school on 13 June 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 April 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You returned to the school fully in October 2017 after an extended period supporting other schools in the trust. In your absence, the school's current deputy headteacher maintained the pace of improvement and the school has continued to grow. You have made good use of the increased opportunities afforded through working with other schools in the trust. Leaders, teachers and support staff share good practice and gain ongoing professional development through linking directly with colleagues in similar roles. This has markedly strengthened teaching.

You acknowledge that your work supporting leadership in other schools has strengthened your own leadership of school effectiveness. Your current evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development is accurate and purposeful; for example the school development plan identifies the need to improve the teaching of mathematics. Governors are rigorous in questioning all leaders about improvements to teaching and increasing the pace of pupils' progress.

Parents and pupils are highly positive about the school. Pupils are enthused by the rich learning experiences they have. As a parent typically stated, 'Our child is always stimulated by the exciting learning opportunities and challenges pupils are given and they really respond well to the way in which the school encourages and really celebrates learning in all areas of the curriculum.'

At the previous inspection, you were asked to raise the level of challenge in lessons. Generally, this has been achieved well. Pupils are diligent and enthusiastic learners. Their topic books show that the level of challenge in the work presented to the pupils extends beyond mathematics and English lessons. For example, pupils in Year 2 explained what they knew about sea creatures, showing the same skills in writing as they used in their English books. However, there is not always the same level of challenge about presentation in the key stage 2 books. You have developed teachers' ability to increase challenge in lessons by encouraging them to plan and seek the professional development they need next. As a result, staff morale is good and confidence in your leadership is high. You were also asked to promote the value of democracy more consistently. This now pervades the school. For example, the early years children learn to work as a group to make decisions and these skills develop across key stages 1 and 2.

Safeguarding is effective.

You maintain a high level of training for all staff in how to protect pupils from harm. You update staff weekly on local risks, particularly those relating to the 'Prevent' duty to keep pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism. Consequently, staff are alert to signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff report their concerns confidently and effectively. You take prompt action to work with external agencies to seek support for pupils and their families. You are persistent and continue to challenge the relevant agencies until you feel secure that the support is being effective.

Governors regularly support and monitor the safeguarding work of the school. They have ensured that all recruitment checks and those on volunteers who work with pupils in the school are robust and that records are well maintained. You and your governors have compiled detailed risk assessments for the work of the school. However, the risk assessments for clubs and childcare at the end of the school day do not make some of the arrangements for the handover of pupils clear enough. This is important because there is currently insufficient monitoring of pupils as they move between settings at the end of each day.

Parents and carers are complimentary about the attention that the school gives to their children's well-being. Pupils say they feel safe in school and place trust in their friends and teachers. They are adamant that there is no bullying. However, school records and pupils' comments indicate that a small number of pupils do not always show the same good behaviour they demonstrate in lessons. Pupils' play can become too boisterous and reduce the enjoyment for others. Although swift action is taken when behaviour dips, these incidents have not as yet been fully eradicated.

Inspection findings

- I first reviewed the actions you have taken to secure consistently strong progress for pupils across key stage 2. Increasingly, pupils' learning has progressed well across key stage 1 and the standards they reach have been high. Overall, the progress then made across key stage 2 has highlighted that not all pupils have

made the consistently strong progress that the school aspires to. Nonetheless, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics has been above national levels.

- You have identified and remedied weaknesses in teaching, which have in the past led to erratic and slower progress. For example, although they are making better progress this year, there is still a legacy of weaker progress over time for some of the current Year 6 pupils. Teachers now plan more precisely around pupils' starting points. Your monitoring of the quality of teaching is directly driven by its impact on pupils' progress. More precise decisions are being made about the additional help and challenge needed to ensure that no group of pupils slips behind. Consequently, more pupils are making accelerated progress this year.
- I looked more closely at the teaching of mathematics and how this was deepening pupils' learning. The proportion of pupils reaching greater depth in mathematics in 2017 was lower than that attained in reading and writing. Pupils' progress was also weaker. You have developed the teaching of mathematics so that pupils have more opportunity to strengthen their ability to solve problems and to explain their reasoning. You recognise that there is still some work to do to ensure that tasks always have sufficient depth to challenge the most able pupils.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and the teaching seen during this inspection proceeded at a good pace. Across the school, pupils demonstrate good skills of calculation and fluent and accurate mental recall of numbers. They are taught useful strategies to tackle problem solving. For example, pupils solving a problem on sharing pizzas immediately drew and highlighted the relevant fractions as a basis for addition and subtraction. Reviews of pupils' work showed that not all pupils fully read the questions they are asked or answer fully. They carry out the calculation, but do not for example say which was the odd one out or the tallest mountain. Therefore, their deeper understanding is not yet demonstrated.
- You and governors place a high priority on ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make the progress of which they are capable. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils has varied over time. You have tackled this aspect by appointing a senior leader to act as a 'champion' for this group of pupils and her work is already showing a positive impact on pupils' progress. The 'champion' has reviewed the extra teaching and pastoral support that is on offer to accelerate pupils' progress. She reports on which strategies have had the greatest impact. Governors use this information to ensure that they use additional funding effectively.
- Disadvantaged pupils are encouraged to express their aspirations and learning needs through their school 'passport'. This enables all staff who work with the pupils to encourage and mentor them. When attending discussions on pupils' progress the leader further guides teachers and other leaders in ensuring that pupils' targets are set high enough in order to accelerate progress further.
- The level of pupils' attendance has been broadly in line with average levels and continues to be so. However, there has historically been a small group of pupils, some of whom are disadvantaged, who have not attended well, and this still remains the case. However, the steps you have taken, which include both supporting and challenging families, have markedly improved the attendance of

others. Your strong safeguarding procedures and prompt investigation of the reasons why pupils are not in school are leading to an overall reduction in persistent absence.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers develop pupils' skills to reason and solve problems in mathematics, and provide more opportunities for pupils to work at greater depth
- incidents of misbehaviour are investigated, reviewed and quickly eradicated
- governors review and strengthen the risk assessments they currently hold for the range of after-school activities currently taking place at the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the Bath and Wells Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Bath and Wells, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Marriott
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I visited all classes in key stages 1 and 2 with senior leaders. I reviewed a sample of pupils' mathematics and topic books. Leaders shared their monitoring of the quality of teaching and their information on pupils' progress. I reviewed the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan. I met with a representative of the Bath and Wells Academy Trust. I spoke to the chair of governors on the telephone and met with an additional governor. I visited the after-school childcare operated by the school and the sports club, which most pupils attend. I reviewed the school's safeguarding records including risk assessments and the school's behaviour incident book. I spoke with a group of pupils and asked others for their views of the school. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I also took account of the 37 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 19 additional written comments. I reviewed the staff questionnaires completed by 14 members of staff.