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Dear Mr Brown

Short inspection of St Chad's Patchway C of E Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 October 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 have promoted a clear, inspiring vision for the school and are held in very high regard by parents and staff. A warm, welcoming culture with a shared drive for continual improvement is evident throughout the school. You know your pupils and their families very well and are passionate about wanting the very best outcomes for all at the school.

Leaders, teachers and pupils are proud to be a part of St Chad's success. One member of staff said, 'I feel privileged to be part of this incredible school.' You have made sure that responsibilities are shared across the school and have encouraged staff to learn from one another in order to offer support and share good practice.

You have built highly effective teams, not least of which is your talented group of senior leaders and those responsible for key areas of the school's work. They share completely your commitment to ensuring that the school provides the very best for all pupils. Together, you have set the school on an ambitious path of improvement. Pupils' progress has improved significantly in recent years, especially in writing and mathematics.

Despite these strong gains, you show no signs of complacency. For instance, you recognise that, although pupils' progress has improved, too few pupils are reaching the higher standards in reading and mathematics in key stage 2. Over the last year, focused work to provide greater challenge for all pupils is now starting to pay dividends.

You and your governors have a very good understanding of what the school does well and what it needs to do to be even better. Governors are ambitious champions for the school and provide the right balance of support and challenge to leaders. They understand completely the importance of holding leaders to account and make sure that they are kept well informed about how well the school is doing.

St Chad's is a welcoming, caring school. You and your staff consistently put children first and have established very strong, caring relationships. A positive atmosphere is palpable in all classrooms and teachers encourage pupils to work hard and aim high. Corridors and classroom walls teem with attractive displays celebrating pupils' successes. The great majority of parents hold the school in high esteem. As one parent commented, 'This is a wonderful school... it has a great sense of community, is safe, welcoming and inclusive. Our children are really happy and developing well.'

At the last inspection, you were asked to find better ways of sharing strong practice in teaching, to deepen pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts and to strengthen their spelling skills. The school has made strong gains in each of these areas. You have created a climate in which staff not only learn from each other but also share their expertise with colleagues in neighbouring schools. Your structured and concerted efforts to improve pupils' spelling and to improve their fluency in mathematics have played a major role in boosting pupils' skills in these areas.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that effective action is taken to safeguard pupils. Training is up to date, records are maintained meticulously and pre-employment checks on teachers and other staff are thorough.

All pupils are kept out of harm as a result of strong pastoral and multi-agency work. Staff and governors receive regular high-quality training and are able to carry out the school's policy and procedures well. This helps ensure a secure culture of vigilance.

Staff are clear about their responsibilities and know what to do if they have any concerns over pupils' welfare. Records are well kept, referrals are made in a timely manner and outside agencies are used appropriately.

You have made sure that pupils have access to a wide range of curriculum, pastoral and online guidance that ensures and supports their personal safety. You keep the needs of your vulnerable pupils under regular review.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed our key lines of enquiry.
- The first line of enquiry considered how well leaders are reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent. Historically, attendance overall has been above the national average. However, in 2016 and 2017, a higher than average

number of pupils missed school repeatedly.

- You have tackled this problem with tenacity and success. You and your leaders have reached out to the parents of the small number of pupils who have weak attendance in an empathetic, yet uncompromising, way. You have made use of a wide range of strategies to make sure that pupils attend school regularly, such as timely telephone calls and texts, which are followed up consistently.
- School records show that, over the last year, the proportion of pupils with high levels of persistent absence fell dramatically. Those pupils who previously attended school erratically now have a strong and regular attendance record.
- Our next line of enquiry focused on how effectively leaders are improving the progress of key stage 2 pupils in reading so that it matches the progress they make in writing and in mathematics. In 2017, the progress pupils made in reading declined to be in the bottom 20% of all schools nationally. At the same time, pupils' progress in writing and mathematics was above that seen in most other schools.
- Over the last year, you have introduced a range of strategies to raise teachers' expectations and improve levels of challenge in reading. You have invested in increasing the range of fiction and non-fiction books available to pupils, and pupils have become regular, enthusiastic and fluent readers. One pupil told an inspector, 'I just can't stop reading now.'
- Leaders have developed a curriculum which increasingly supports pupils' reading comprehension through lively topic work in history, geography and science. In key stage 2 reading sessions, teachers use texts that are exciting and inspiring. For example, pupils were reading empathetically about the life of a slave in Roman times. Increasingly, when talking about the texts they have read, pupils are able to make sharp and insightful interpretations regarding plot and characterisation. However, this work is at an early stage and, despite these gains, you and your leaders recognise that too few pupils reach the higher standards in their reading.
- The third line of enquiry looked at the progress being made by the school's most-able pupils. In recent years, the progress made by these pupils has not been strong enough. This has especially been the case in mathematics.
- You and your leaders have set out clear expectations for teachers to provide more challenging and demanding work in mathematics. During the inspection, our learning walks and scrutiny of pupils' work showed a consistent level of challenge across the school, especially for the most able pupils.
- Staff have responded with enthusiasm and determination to make sure that pupils make stronger gains in mathematics. Work in books shows that increasing numbers of pupils are able to solve complex number problems confidently and apply earlier mastered concepts to unfamiliar situations.
- Across all year groups, mathematical work is increasingly demanding. Many of the most able pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given opportunities to deepen their understanding of a concept and find new ways of applying ideas. However, a minority of these pupils do not move on to such tasks in a timely enough manner. As a result, they do not fully make the progress of which they are

capable.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- build on improvements to the teaching of reading and mathematics so that rates of progress, including those for the most able pupils, strengthen further.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Merchant
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your senior leaders, governors and the school improvement adviser from the local authority. I also met with subject leaders. We visited all classrooms to assess the progress being made by pupils. We looked at pupils' workbooks and talked with pupils in classes. I also had a discussion with a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6 to gain their views. Along with a senior leader, I listened to Year 3 and Year 6 pupils read, and we discussed their reading records.

Together, we looked at a range of documentary evidence. This included the school's evaluation of its own performance and plans for improvement. I looked at various documents related to safeguarding, including the single central record. I also scrutinised attendance information for specific groups of pupils.

I gathered views from parents and took account of 21 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. I considered several free-text responses from parents and reviewed the results of the staff questionnaire. I met with a group of four parents at the end of the school day.