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28 June 2017

Mrs Tina Daniel
Executive Headteacher
Netley Marsh Church of England Infant School
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Dear Mrs Daniel

Short inspection of Netley Marsh Church of England Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 6 June 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

You and the head of learning have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You both provide inspirational leadership and staff are proud to work at your school. You know your school and community well and aim for Netley Marsh to be outstanding. You are clear about what needs to improve to make it so, because you have a very secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. You have successfully created an inclusive, caring and ambitious culture. As one member of staff commented, 'There is a real family feel to the school with parents, pupils, our vicar, governors and staff all working together for the best for children.'

Pupils told me how much they enjoy coming to Netley Marsh and how friendly the school is. They spoke about, 'having lots of lovely things to do'. My classroom visits confirmed how much pupils enjoy their learning and how well they work together. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson pupils were helping each other to find different ways of making 20p with a selection of coins. They showed great respect for each other's ideas. Pupils say they have friendly teachers. One pupil said, 'If you are struggling to learn something, the teachers help you.' Staff know the pupils well and parents appreciate the nurturing, welcoming environment.

At the time of the previous inspection, the report noted the many strengths of the school, including outstanding behaviour, good teaching and good achievement. These features remain strengths at Netley Marsh. You have taken effective action to

address the areas for development identified at the time of the last inspection. Governors now have a thorough understanding of what the school needs to do to improve further. Leaders have ensured that the teaching of phonics is accurate and systematic. Through high-quality evaluation, you have ensured that the drive for improvement in teaching and learning is at the heart of everything you do. As a result, teaching is always improving as new, proven strategies are implemented and reviewed.

Leaders have identified that there is still work to be done to ensure that more pupils reach the higher standards. You recognise that pupils will only attain the higher standards if they are challenged more consistently.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders and governors ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed. Governors regularly check that the school's safeguarding processes are working well. Pre-employment checks demonstrate leaders' thorough action in ensuring the suitability of all staff and volunteers to work in school. These are recorded appropriately on the single central record. Safeguarding training is regular and the induction of new staff and volunteers is well planned. You have recently ensured that staff have refreshed their 'Prevent' training. Staff and governors understand their roles in and responsibilities for keeping pupils safe very well.

Most pupils attend the school regularly. However, attendance figures for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have been below the national average for all pupils in primary schools in recent years. Leaders closely track individuals whose attendance is a concern and work effectively with their families to reduce absence. This has resulted in a much-improved picture for this academic year. You ensure that the learning of pupils with medical needs is well supported when they cannot attend school.

Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and that staff look after them well. All parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, feel that their children are safe at school and would recommend Netley Marsh to others. As one parent wrote, 'My children love going to school and feel safe, happy and inspired to always try their best.'

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I considered how effectively leaders are increasing the proportions of pupils attaining the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics and how effectively reading is taught throughout the school. The inspection also focused on how leaders ensure that boys are achieving well in the early years, how effectively leaders and governors ensure that the school continues to improve and how the school keeps pupils safe.
- In Year 2 in 2016, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. You have

carefully investigated why this was the case and you are working effectively on raising expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve. We agreed, following visits to lessons and scrutiny of work in pupils' books, that the progress of the most able pupils, and those with the potential to attain even higher standards, remains an appropriate focus for the school.

- Pupils make at least good progress in reading. The teaching of phonics is well structured and carefully matched to pupils' levels of development. Adults, including teaching assistants, model the correct use of phonics well. The effective teaching of complex comprehension skills is improving pupils' inference skills. Reading at home is well supported by parents. The most able pupils, however, would benefit from opportunities to read more challenging texts. Due to the very low numbers of disadvantaged pupils in the school, it was not possible to come to a firm conclusion about their progress as a group. You shared with me your detailed progress plans for disadvantaged pupils. The plans successfully aim to reduce the impact of any barriers to learning and ensure that pupils meet age-related expectations whenever possible. The vast majority of pupils who have plans in place to accelerate their progress, make rapid progress.
- The proportion of boys who are prepared well for learning in Year 1, by the end of their Reception Year, has been lower in recent years than that of girls. Classroom visits showed that boys enjoy the many activities on offer, are motivated to learn and are independent. Staff capture the boys' interests well and, as a result, boys make steady progress. The indoor and outdoor learning spaces give all children a wide range of learning opportunities to build the foundations of writing, reading and mathematics. Staff ask probing questions to check children's depth of understanding and develop their speech and language skills effectively. Currently, there is no significant difference between the rates of progress of boys and girls in the Reception Year. Both groups are making good progress from their individual starting points.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is honest and accurate. Governors know the school well and have a good grasp of the school's performance information. They undertake regular visits and use what they see to challenge leaders effectively. Governors understand their roles and responsibilities well. Leaders ensure that there is a drive for continual improvement in teaching and learning, with many opportunities to improve practice from within the federation. Leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning is thorough and insightful. Staff are reflective and committed to improving their practice. Leaders have embedded a research-based culture where strategies to improve teaching are investigated and evaluated in terms of outcomes for pupils. As a result, the whole school community is deeply dedicated to continuous improvement and sharing expertise to raise standards further.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching consistently challenges pupils, particularly the most able, to reach higher standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Lea Hannam
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the head of learning at several points during the day to discuss the school's effectiveness. Together, we visited lessons to observe pupils' learning, speak to pupils and look at their work. I met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, and held telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority and a parent. I also had a discussion with a group of pupils and heard others read. I considered 47 responses given by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the accompanying free-text comments, as well as speaking to some parents at the beginning of the school day. I looked at the school's safeguarding arrangements. I analysed a range of documents, including: your evaluation of the school's effectiveness; school improvement planning; records of pupils' attendance; assessment information; performance management records; monitoring records and local authority reports. Together, we scrutinised samples of pupils' work. I also considered the responses of staff to Ofsted's online questionnaire.