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Mr Daniel Hunwick  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Hunwick

### **Short inspection of Puddletown Church of England First School**

Following my visit to the school on 23 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in February 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your dedication to continued improvement, for example through research and innovation, means that you are always seeking different ways to motivate pupils and staff. Together with other leaders including governors, you have been effective in establishing a strong culture for learning. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their learning when they leave Puddletown at the end of Year 4.

Pupils, staff and parents and carers are proud of the school. In particular, pupils know that they are well supported to attend and achieve well. Teachers know the pupils well and so plan work that is well matched to pupils' individual needs. This supports pupils, including those who need help to catch up, to make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Parents recognise the strengths of the school; in fact, 100% of those parents who responded to Parent View said that they would recommend the school to others. Positive comments endorse the work of leaders, such as 'The school is brilliant at recognising the individual need of my child and provide[s] a stimulating environment which is nurturing yet challenging.'

Since the previous inspection, you have worked diligently to address the areas for improvement. In particular, you have tackled weaknesses to ensure that mathematics is planned and taught consistently so that pupils are developing fluency in their mathematical skills and reasoning. You also ensure that lessons are matched well to pupils' different abilities. However, there are still some occasions or

parts of lessons when the most able pupils are not stretched fully, especially as they move through key stage 2.

Together with other leaders and governors, you have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. In particular, you are aware that pupils' writing skills, in all classes and across different subjects, are an area for development. Furthermore, some variance in the quality of pupils' handwriting skills prevents a few from being able to reach the highest standards of which they are capable. These are aspects that you are keen to address in raising pupils' achievement even further.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You and all leaders, including governors, have a relentless focus on pupils' welfare. Staff are well trained, which has contributed towards a strong culture for safeguarding pupils. For example, following an audit of staff needs, governors introduced additional training about female genital mutilation, which is now widely understood, including how to respond and report concerns. Staff are vigilant and knowledgeable when it comes to safeguarding practice and procedures. They know when and how to refer concerns in a timely and appropriate manner to keep pupils safe.

Pupils said that they feel safe. They told me what bullying is and that this is rare. If they have any worries, pupils are not afraid to tell a trusted adult in school and have confidence in them. Pupils like the staff and enjoy positive relationships with adults in various roles. For example, they told me, 'Teachers are really kind and if you're hurt, they'll help you.' Pupils show a good understanding of how to stay safe, including when working online, and how to respond in the event of a fire.

### **Inspection findings**

- My first line of enquiry evaluated how well pupils are enabled to sustain the strong outcomes from the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics through Years 3 and 4. Teachers continue to target and support pupils well through a range of effective teaching strategies, including personalised interventions to support pupils to make strong progress. Teachers use assessment information effectively to pinpoint what pupils need to learn next. This supports pupils in deepening their knowledge and enhances their key skills so that they are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- However, teachers' expectations of pupils' writing are not consistently high enough in various situations or subjects. For example, pupils' writing in their English and writing books is typically much higher than the quality seen in the same pupils' writing in science. As a result, some pupils are not producing the same high-quality work across the curriculum, which can hold them back.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' progression in handwriting bring about variable outcomes, in terms of legibility, fluency and speed, towards meeting the highest standards of writing across the school. You are keen to tackle this so that pupils

at different ages and stages can be challenged to meet the most exacting standards and enjoy writing at length and depth.

- The second key line of enquiry focused on how well the teaching of phonics supports pupils in their early development of reading and writing. Results in the Year 1 phonics screening check are consistently above the national average, including in 2017. You have implemented a daily approach to the teaching of phonics in the Reception Year and Year 1. This helps pupils to learn and apply their phonic knowledge well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this effectively to model letters and their corresponding sounds well.
- Teachers use assessment information effectively to check the sounds that pupils know and intervene quickly when pupils start to fall behind. Teachers set precise targets so that they and teaching assistants know exactly which sounds individual pupils need to learn in order to catch up. Teachers' regular checks and monitoring ensure a strong focus on pupils' knowledge so that pupils achieve well.
- The third key line of enquiry concentrated on the development of children's writing in the Reception Year. You and other leaders had already identified this as a priority prior to the inspection. This was already an area for development on the school's development plan. As a result, you have introduced a range of strategies to strengthen children's fine motor skills in readiness for writing.
- The introduction of fun themes and topics, such as 'dinosaurs', are also strongly motivating children, especially boys, to 'have a go'. Children are interested and keen to write. Consequently, they are confident in writing independently for a variety of different reasons and purposes. Current assessment information shows that this is having a positive effect on the proportion of children now meeting the standards expected for their age, as well as on some who are starting to exceed these.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers have the highest expectations in writing so that standards are consistently high across different subjects and in all year groups
- the legibility, fluency and speed of pupils' handwriting continue to improve, in order to improve the overall quality of their writing.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Salisbury, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Dorset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stewart Gale  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

We agreed the timetable and related activities at the start of the inspection. I worked extensively with you, including when reviewing pupils' books together. I scrutinised safeguarding records, and we discussed a wide range of matters related to safeguarding, including staff recruitment, training and vetting arrangements. I reviewed evidence to show how you work and liaise with multi-agency partners to keep children safe. Together, we visited lessons across the school. We scrutinised a sample of pupils' workbooks and I spoke with pupils and subject leaders in line with our agreed key lines of enquiry. I also met with representatives of the governing body and reviewed school documents, including the school's self-evaluation summary and samples of governors' visits. I also held a discussion with the chief executive officer of the trust.

I took full account of the 93 responses on Parent View and surveys, including the 80 free-texts received for the inspection. Additionally, there were 16 staff and 48 pupil responses taken into account as part of the inspection.