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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Joseph Rubba
Headteacher
Wychwood Church of England Primary School
Milton Road
Shipton-under-Wychwood
Chipping Norton
Oxfordshire
OX7 6BD

Dear Mr Rubba

Short inspection of Wychwood Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 May 2019, 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 December 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 a very clear vision of what you want education at Wychwood to look like. Pupils are, securely, at the very centre of this vision. Consequently, they achieve well and enjoy coming to school. You and your team take the time to know each pupil well. Relationships throughout the school are mutually respectful and good humoured. You have formed strong bonds with pupils, parents, carers, staff and the community, which have resulted in a united and happy school in which children thrive.

Pupils value highly their well-developed grounds, especially the new multi-use games area. They relish the many opportunities provided by the school for them to be active and healthy. They are clear about the school's expectations of them being 'ready, respectful and safe', which they model through, for example, completing risk assessments before climbing the trees. Pupils are well equipped to build good relationships and resolve minor fallings-out. They told me that: 'Teachers listen. If it's a falling-out they encourage you to sort it out because you have to learn.'

Parents are fully supportive of the school – all of those who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, would recommend it. They are rightly confident in your calm and purposeful leadership and the dedication and skill of the staff. One parent typified the views of many in writing: 'It's a lovely school, with a real passion for

helping every child find their identity and talents.'

You have maintained the strengths identified at the previous inspection. Teaching across the school is highly effective. Teachers listen carefully to pupils. They ensure that they take every opportunity to spot when pupils may be confused or where their thinking can be extended. Teachers' expectations are high, and pupils respond with enthusiasm.

You have addressed the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. You are rightly proud of the way in which the development of the early years has strengthened provision. During the inspection, children in early years were totally immersed in a wide range of outdoor activities ranging from hammering to storytelling with wooden spoons. Every opportunity is taken to strengthen children's early skills in reading, writing and mathematics through, for example, ordering numbered bottle tops on a large grid or writing Post-it Notes as directions to 'find the treasure'. Boys and girls are eager to learn in such an inviting environment. Highly skilled staff use questions and commentary very well to develop children's vocabulary and thinking. In this way, children are well prepared for Year 1.

During the inspection, teaching across the school extended pupils' thinking well through the use of probing questions and high expectations. For example, an outside session where pupils were enjoying toasting crumpets over a fire was cleverly used as a revision of the scientific understanding of friction when discussing how fires were ignited.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All necessary checks are carried out before staff are appointed. Safeguarding training is up to date and complete. Staff are well trained in matters of child protection. Any necessary referrals are made in a timely fashion and followed up with tenacity where required. Processes have been reviewed by governors, who work effectively with leaders to ensure that everything is as it should be. Together, you have revised risk assessment to include recent changes, both to and around the school, such as the nearby building site and the addition of the multi-use games area.

Pupil well-being is a central feature of the culture of the school. This helps to keep pupils safe. Pupils know who to speak to if they have concerns. They are confident that they will be listened to. They have good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe, including when online. All parents and staff who completed the surveys felt that pupils were safe at school.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we looked closely together at the quality of pupils' writing across the school. Writing outcomes are improving. Leaders' actions, for example in tightening expectations of grammatical construction and developing reading

and writing links, have been effective. Nonetheless, there remain a few year groups and other groups whose progress is inconsistent. Leaders know that continued focus is needed before the improvements are completely embedded. You have also rightly focused on developing pupils' spelling. The more structured approach that has recently been introduced is beginning to have an impact, but it is too early to see this improvement consistently in pupils' work across the curriculum.

- Across the school, more pupils are attaining at higher standards. The writing of the most able pupils is typified by the use of ambitious descriptive phrases and confident use of a range of sentence structures. Pupils are well supported by high-quality teaching in which aspirational language choices are modelled and encouraged.
- We also looked at the teaching of reading, particularly in key stage 1. Current pupils are achieving well. Leaders have successfully raised phonics outcomes. Pupils who read to me demonstrated a confident use of phonics skills. Leaders' focus on building on these skills within rich texts has helped to secure improvement in reading. Pupils are keen readers who enjoy regular opportunities to read for a range of purposes. They appreciate the use of the well-stocked library. Wisely, there is now a focus on ensuring that pupils read with the accuracy and precision that will support their comprehension skills and further develop their enjoyment.
- We looked at the quality of the school's curriculum. Curriculum provision across the school is broad and rich. It engages pupils well and provides them with plenty of opportunity for exciting experiences and memorable learning such as those provided by the outdoor-learning focus during the inspection. Nevertheless, you are rightly reviewing how well the curriculum develops pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Sometimes opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills, for instance through recording scientific investigation, are not well developed. In the wider curriculum, pupils' books show that some pupils do not take the same level of care with both the content and presentation of their work as in their other work.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvements in pupils' writing are embedded and further developed so that outcomes continue to rise
- expectations across the curriculum of pupils' writing are raised, and opportunities for them to write are further developed.

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

Deborah Gordon
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we met regularly together. I also met with staff, members of the governing body, and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I reviewed documentation, including: the school's own information about pupils' achievement; the school improvement plan; and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures.

Together, we visited classes across the school. In lessons, I observed pupils learning, looked at their books, and spoke to pupils about their work. I had a meeting with pupils to gather their views of the school and to hear them read. I took into account the views of parents I met on the playground, and also considered 137 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 88 free-text comments. I also analysed 16 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.