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Mrs Gabby Howells
Head of School
Samuel White's Infant School
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Dear Mrs Howells

Short inspection of Samuel White's Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 5 February 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 May 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You were appointed as head of school in 2016. You have worked closely with the executive headteacher to continue to develop high-quality teaching and learning. Currently, your highly effective leadership skills are being used more widely across the county to support another federation. However, you maintain a strong focus on continuing to deepen the school's curriculum and promote pupils' achievement. Governors share leaders' ambitions for the school. They meet regularly with senior and middle leaders to check the progress of the school's planned improvements. Parents are positive about the breadth of experience the school gives their children. All parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, would recommend the school. One parent expressed the beneficial influence of the school on her children by saying, 'They have nurtured their academic, emotional, musical, nature-loving and artistic selves.'

The school's vision is to inspire and celebrate learning. Teachers and leaders with strong subject knowledge plan imaginative ways for pupils to learn. Pupils share learning with children in other countries through the school's European project and

recent topics have taught pupils about children's lives in Japan and China. The arrival of 'T Rex' in the school hall was the start of exciting and deep learning in history and science. At the previous inspection leaders were asked to promote pupils' learning at a deeper level. Teachers help pupils to be curious about the world around them. For example, pupils, when learning about 'super heroes', investigated magnetism as a 'super power'. You are proud of the school's strong teaching in physical education and the 'gold award', which recognises pupils' skills as leaders.

Alongside their acquisition of a wide breadth of knowledge, pupils develop good basic skills. In the 2018 assessments, standards at the end of the Reception Year and at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics were above the national average. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils also reached expected standards in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. The proportion of pupils reaching greater depth at the end of Year 2 was at or above the national average. Even so, you recognise that some of the most able pupils can still be challenged further to develop their learning. This priority is reflected in the federation development plan.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school's procedures and policies for safeguarding are effective. They are kept under regular review by governors and leaders. All checks are made and efficiently recorded to ensure that the recruitment of staff and volunteers is carried out in line with best practice. Staff undertake a wide range of training, which enables them to identify signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Leaders have recently implemented a system which enables them to build a broad picture of risk by collating and analysing safeguarding concerns, behaviour reports and attendance information. As a result, they work particularly well with other agencies as part of the support for families in need of help.

Pupils say they feel safe because their teachers and friends care for them. They value their 'friendship tokens' and are ready to share them with pupils looking for a friend. All parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their children feel safe in school. Leaders take extensive steps to check on the whereabouts of pupils who are not in school. The families of the very few pupils who do not attend regularly are challenged and supported to improve their children's attendance.

Inspection findings

- Some children, including the most able children, start school with a relatively weak pencil grip for writing. They quickly develop the style of letter formation promoted by the school. However, in recent years, few have gone on to exceed the early learning goal for writing. Teachers in the Reception classes promote children's interest in writing through imaginative curricular links. As part of their project on post offices, children have written 'jolly postman' letters. Their parents have supported learning by writing back to the children. This is developing children's confidence and enthusiasm for writing. Some of the most able children's writing already shows features of the higher standard expected for

their age.

- In recent assessments at the end of key stage 1, a smaller proportion of pupils reached greater depth in writing than did so in other subjects. Pupils are taught the skills of spelling and punctuation effectively. The most able pupils in Year 2 routinely use paragraphs to organise their writing. The school has recently invested in new stories to stimulate pupils' interest in writing. Teachers link stories to other learning to deepen pupils' understanding. However, reviews of pupils' work showed that while some writing tasks develop pupils' knowledge at the expected standard, they do not sufficiently challenge the most able to extend their ideas.
- The wider curriculum for science and history is motivating and pupils are enthusiastic about their new knowledge. In discussion, pupils from Year 2 talked animatedly about the life of Mary Anning, the palaeontologist, and her search for fossils. They demonstrated their scientific knowledge of dinosaurs by explaining that they were carnivores, herbivores or omnivores. The pupils relished using new vocabulary accurately. Teachers recognise that widening pupils' vocabulary will support the deepening of pupils' writing skills. When challenged to record their knowledge of science and history, the most able pupils extended their ideas and showed their deeper writing skills. This was particularly evident in Year 1 when pupils wrote about polar and jungle animals.
- Pupils in key stage 1 apply their mathematical skills through their topic work. Pupils regularly collect and sort information, recording it in tally charts and bar graphs. The older pupils use 'decision trees' to identify animals. These interesting activities are enabling all pupils, including the most able, to extend and deepen their mathematical reasoning and recording skills.
- The proportion of pupils in the school who are disadvantaged is low compared to the national average. Leaders are nonetheless highly ambitious for these pupils' achievement. Careful use of resources and sharp target-setting are enabling pupils to make strong progress. Teachers have high expectations, including of the most able disadvantaged pupils, and their work shows that they are on track to reach the higher standards. Similarly, where pupils need to catch up to the expected level for their age, they are given effective additional help. Governors make regular checks to ensure that additional funding is used to successfully promote pupils' progress.
- The inclusion leader has developed strong practice to ensure that pupils with SEND are included in whole-class teaching. She has planned pupils' learning activities so that they can develop and practise new skills to help them catch up in their learning. Teachers are skilled in adapting tasks to develop pupils' confidence and resilience so they are more able to tackle the classroom learning. The inclusion leader monitors the progress of pupils with SEND through discussions with teachers and visits to class. Leaders and teachers share a deep knowledge of pupils' needs and this, together with precise targets, is enabling pupils with SEND to make positive progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers further develop pupils' vocabulary and enthusiasm for writing so that more pupils, particularly the most able, reach greater depth.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, 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

Wendy Marriott
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection I met with you and the executive headteacher. Together, we visited classrooms to talk to pupils about their learning. I also met with the inclusion leader to discuss the progress of pupils with SEND. I took account of the school's latest assessments of pupils' achievement and reviewed samples of pupils' work in writing, science and history. I held a meeting with a group of governors and made a telephone call to the chair of the governing body. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the federation development plan and external reviews of the school's performance. I held discussions about safeguarding and reviewed the school's procedures. I held a meeting with a group of pupils to take account of their views of the school. I spoke to parents at the start of the school day and took account of the 64 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I considered the views of staff through the 12 responses to the online staff survey.