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Mr D Sibley
The Headteacher
Longwell Green Primary School
Ellacombe Road
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Dear Mr Sibley

Short inspection of Longwell Green Primary School

Following my visit to the school on Wednesday 4 November 2015, 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 school was judged to be good in June 2012.

This school continues to be good.

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

- The school's core values are very clearly reflected in the everyday life of the school. This is because you, the other leaders and all staff ensure that pupils are helped to grow both academically and in their personal development. They are encouraged to respect each other and enjoy their time at school. Pupils successfully develop ambition and work together effectively.
- At the heart of the success of this great school is the ambition that you and your deputy headteacher demonstrate. This ensures that all pupils make the best possible progress. Although you work very closely together, you use your own individual strengths to successfully drive school improvement.
- Other leaders, including governors, are equally ambitious for the school. This ensures that there is a cohesive approach to the ethos and culture of the school.
- Staff, both teaching and non-teaching, report that this is a 'fantastic school to work in'. They explain that there is a very close working relationship between all staff members. Staff feel that they are always

valued by senior leaders and find their innovative approach rewarding. They all agree that the enhancement of pupils' learning experiences must be at the centre of every improvement made.

- The school is a vibrant and exciting place to learn in. There is a consistency in the way that classrooms are set up to promote and develop learning. Informative displays demonstrate concepts and key skills. This helps the pupils to consolidate what they are learning. It also encourages them to seek guidance and advice on their own. Nevertheless, there could be more high-quality written work on display to encourage and aspire other pupils to write well.
- You have successfully tackled the areas that were identified at the previous inspection as needing to improve. Middle leaders have quickly got to grips with the requirements of the new National Curriculum and have a very clear understanding of the quality of teaching within their subject areas. They have carefully crafted a consistent system which checks individual pupils' progress in each subject. This is ensuring that teachers know exactly how well the pupils are achieving. It also enables them to spot those who need further help or require extra stimulation, and to provide these.
- The previous inspection highlighted the need for you and your staff to provide greater challenge for the more able. The way in which the new curriculum is being taught, and the way in which pupils' progress is now being checked, is supporting this very well. Teachers are now able to identify those pupils who are ready to deepen their knowledge and extend their use of key skills. More-able Year 6 mathematicians confidently completed work that would normally be tackled in Year 7. However, pupils do not always apply their mathematical skills to support their learning in other subjects.

Safeguarding is effective.

- The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are very detailed and of high quality. This ensures that pupils are protected and kept safe in school.
- You and your team have created a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Both parents and staff confirm that, 'The welfare of children always comes first. The school has a very caring ethos.' By making sure that all adults who come into contact with pupils are carefully checked and trained, you and your team keep all pupils safe. All members of staff get to know families well and keep a close eye out for any concerns. Any issues raised by staff are carefully logged and tracked. Good working relationships with external agencies, such as social services and the police, support the work you do to promote the well-being of all your pupils.

- Pupils report that they feel safe and point out that they feel particularly comfortable approaching teachers with any worries or concerns.
- In response to 'Prevent', which is a government initiative to promote an awareness of any form of extremism, you have very recently adopted a suitable policy, which will be shared with staff. You and your deputy headteacher are shortly to attend the 'Prevent' training which has been organised by your local authority.

Inspection findings

- School leaders have been fully aware that pupils have not been doing as well as they could in the Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds the make) check. Over the past two years, staffing changes in Reception and Year 1 have resulted in a much sharper focus on the teaching of letters and sounds. By giving children opportunities to play with letter shapes and practise their sounds as soon as they start school, they quickly become familiar with them. Reception classrooms are filled with visual prompts which children enthusiastically respond to.
- Current Year 1 pupils have started this year with a much better understanding of letters and sounds when compared to last year's cohort. They continue to improve rapidly. Year 1 pupils are split into groups so that they can learn their letters and sounds according to their own stage of development. This enables teachers to plan for specific needs and help those pupils who may be experiencing particular difficulties. Year 1 pupils consolidate their learning well when they are required to identify words that are real and words that are not. This helps them to cope with the demands of the phonics check.
- The school has placed a greater emphasis on helping to close the gaps between the outcomes of boys and girls in Years 1 and 2. By undertaking some research and training into the way boys learn best, teachers now make sure that their lessons are as visual and as practical as possible. This has worked well. Since the start of this academic year, teachers have also given boys reminders in their books to help them quickly recall what they learnt the day before. Current information from the school shows that the achievement gap between boys and girls is decreasing rapidly.
- There has been an increased focus on making sure that girls in Year 6 achieve as well as boys in mathematics. Staff have tackled this successfully by encouraging girls to work together in groups and develop their ability to solve problems more confidently.
- Leaders have recently introduced an innovative approach to supporting those pupils who are disadvantaged. By discreetly identifying them with a special role, they meet regularly with teachers to talk about their learning. This has raised their self-esteem and encouraged them to be more

involved in their learning. Recently, parents of disadvantaged pupils have been invited into school to contribute to their children's learning. They have also provided valuable advice on improving the school's website.

- Since the start of the new school year, there has been a heightened focus on ensuring that pupils present their work neatly. Current books show work that has been carefully completed and presented. Teachers are consistent in their request for work to be dated, lines to be drawn with a ruler, and squares used appropriately in mathematics books. This has resulted in the pupils taking a greater pride in their work and aiming for excellence.
- The school makes very good use of the expertise of a modern foreign language specialist to help pupils learning French. By introducing this language in Reception, pupils gradually develop an impressive vocabulary of French words and phrases. It also helps pupils to begin to develop an awareness of other cultures and customs.
- The attitudes of the pupils to their learning is extremely impressive. In lessons, they concentrate very hard on their work and are clearly focused on the activities set. They help each other out when required and respond confidently to the questions asked by the teachers. Pupils are very clear about the behaviour that is expected of them. They are respectful of each other and enjoy school life.
- Governors are very involved in the day-to-day life of the school and this enables them to have an accurate knowledge of its strengths and the areas that require further development. They are not afraid to challenge senior leaders of the school and do so with knowledge and conviction. Governors are extremely well organised and have clear succession planning for the future.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- pupils are encouraged to use their mathematical skills to solve problems in other subject areas
- pupils share and celebrate good-quality work so that they can recognise high standards and be inspired to achieve these themselves.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the deputy headteacher to discuss the school's self-evaluation, information about the progress pupils were making and improvements since the last inspection. I noted that, as a consequence of either promotion or retirement, there had been a substantial turnover of staff since the last inspection. I held discussions with your middle leaders and seven governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. I also had a meeting with a senior officer from the local authority. You and I visited all year groups together and looked at some pupils' books. I met with a group of pupils and looked at comments made by staff on the inspection questionnaire. I looked at the survey results from the online survey, Parent View, and considered comments that were received from parents.