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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Tonie Scott
Headteacher
Bishop Henderson Church of England Primary School
Farley Dell
Coleford
Radstock
Somerset
BA3 5PN

Dear Mrs Scott

Short inspection of Bishop Henderson Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 January 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Your vision for continuous improvement and your rigorous approach in holding staff to account for their performance in raising standards further are clear and focused. Bishop Henderson's values of 'Fun, Friendship, Respect, Peace, Trust, Thankfulness, Compassion and Courage' are embodied in pupils' attitudes to school and are supported well by all staff. Governors share and support the priorities that you have identified as the areas the school needs to work on in order to improve the quality of education even further. These include increasing the level of challenge, especially for the most able, and involving parents even further in their children's learning, especially in the early years.

Since the previous inspection, you have improved teachers' use of assessment information to plan tasks to meet the needs of all pupils, especially in mathematics. Teachers now share best practice in teaching in a collaborative, learning culture where professional dialogue about what is working well, and learned from, is typical. The specialist leader in education, who is part of the leadership team, is helping colleagues improve their teaching, where consistent challenge and high expectations are the norm. All staff are benefiting from this approach, including newly qualified teachers, who display confidence in their understanding of school systems and expectations.

The school has devised a mathematics assessment system involving all members of staff and some pupils. In every mathematics session, staff identify different tasks for each pupil and record pupils' understanding of their tasks at the end of the session using a 'traffic light system'. This information is then used to identify individual needs clearly and what needs to be taught to pupils in the next lesson to help them progress. This has resulted in improved attainment and progress in mathematics across the school. You acknowledge that it is now time to expand this quality of assessment to challenge all pupils further. You are aware that this will help deepen the pupils' understanding, especially those who are most able, in mathematics and English.

Parents are extremely pleased with the quality of education you provide, particularly the care that their children receive during their time at the school. The vast majority of parents who responded to the online inspection questionnaire, Parent View, said they would recommend the school. This matches with the school's own questionnaire results. The school is the centre of a community in which staff and parents work well together to improve educational outcomes for pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are secure and followed meticulously, with detailed records. Statutory checks are carried out on the suitability of staff to work with children. Governors' intention to increase the number of staff trained in safer recruitment is wise. Because of the training and frequent updates they receive, all staff have up-to-date knowledge of current safeguarding requirements and are vigilant about the risks posed to pupils, including radicalisation and extremism. The role of the school's inclusion team ensures that pupils in need are identified and supported early, strengthening the positive safeguarding culture that exists in the school. The school has appropriate monitoring and filtering in place for its internet connection and strong online safety procedures.

Pupils feel safe in school and enjoy their school life. They have a good understanding of the different types of bullying and say these are rare. Pupils are confident that teachers deal effectively with any concerns they may have. School records show that pupils' behaviour is well managed in school. Younger members of the school are well cared for by staff and their older peers, through a 'buddy system'. This kind and caring behaviour exemplifies the school's core Christian ethos.

Inspection findings

- Last year, pupils' outcomes at key stage 1 were disappointing, despite your attempts to improve pupils' understanding. However, you have now successfully addressed this issue. The work carried out to improve teaching across the school is ensuring that the previous Year 2 pupils, now in Year 3, are now back on track, following the blip last year. Pupils' work, especially in writing, discussions with

the leaders, examination of planning and assessment, and the current assessment data show that you are successfully improving the achievement of pupils currently in Year 2. Outcomes, especially for girls, are projected to be above those of last year.

- Mathematics planning, based on a thorough assessment process during lessons, identifies areas that need to be addressed for each pupil to help them improve. Actions to improve teaching are focused correctly. It is now time, as you acknowledge, for planning and teaching to be further refined so that teachers are able to challenge pupils to achieve greater depth in their learning, especially the most able.
- Your work with the enthusiastic teachers in the early years, alongside the assistant headteacher, has brought a breath of fresh air to early years and has transformed the learning environment. Most children enter the Nursery with skills lower than expected in language development and number. These children now get off to a flying start in the Nursery and this continues in the Reception class. The classrooms are filled with well-considered, high-quality resources, which interest and engage the children. As a result of your actions, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of early years rose last year. The use of the individual learning books which record children's achievements are shared with parents but have very little contribution from parents in them. There is room for further improvement in this aspect of your work and you are looking at recording the learning books electronically to encourage parents to be more involved in their children's learning.
- Your insistence on regular and effective phonics teaching, especially in the early years, is paying dividends. Standards in phonics are rising and this is reflected in the pupils' reading and their ability to tackle unknown words in their texts. Pupils in key stage 2 are passionate about reading and appreciate the wealth of high-quality books available to them. Across the school, pupils speak confidently about their favourite authors and genres. Evidence in books shows that high-quality teaching and assessment have maintained reading and writing as strengths of the school.
- Attendance for the last academic year was in line with the national average. Staff, especially the inclusion team, keep a close eye on the more vulnerable pupils who are absent more than others and ensure that there is effective support on their return to school. As a result, the levels of absence have reduced. This is testament to the successful collaboration between the school's staff and pupils' families.
- Governors' oversight of the strategic direction of the school is extensive. The governing body maintains a careful overview of the work of the school. Governors use their wide-ranging skills to good effect to keep the work of the school under close review and maintain good links with the community. However, governors agree that they need to ensure the accuracy of the documents on the website so that the information is statutorily compliant.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching provides greater challenge for all pupils, especially the most able, so that the proportions of pupils achieving above age-related expectations at the end of key stage 1, and of children at the end of the early years exceeding expectations, increase
- the early years provision creates greater parental involvement in their children's learning, through improving the quality of informing parents of their children's successes in the individual learning books
- the school website is compliant with statutory requirements.

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

Yours sincerely

Terry Mortimer
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, your assistant headteacher and members of staff. The inspection also involved a meeting with four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. The responses from 18 parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered. We visited all the classrooms together to observe and speak with pupils about their learning. Pupils' writing, mathematics work and English books from four classes were scrutinised. A wide range of documentation and information relating to your self-evaluation, school improvement planning, equalities, assessment, monitoring and evaluation, and safeguarding were also examined.

The key lines of enquiry during the short inspection day were:

- the impact of leadership and management in developing achievement in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 1, especially for girls
- the effectiveness of phonics teaching in improving pupils' skills in reading and writing across the school
- whether leaders have ensured that the website gives parents correct information and is statutorily compliant
- how effectively the school encourages attendance and keeps the pupils safe.