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Mrs Suzanna Featherstone-Wright  
Headteacher  
Binfield Church of England Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Featherstone-Wright

### **Short inspection of Binfield Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 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 the school was judged to be good in September 2013.

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

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

Working in partnership with your very active Friends of Binfield School parent-teacher association, you have implemented several improvements since the last inspection. The school offers a very warm and inclusive community atmosphere. Together, leaders, governors and staff share high ambitions for the pupils in your care and are passionate about improving the quality of provision for all pupils. You provide a clear vision and strong leadership which are recognised and highly valued by pupils, staff and the local authority. One parent spoke for many when they commented:

'The school is a caring and inclusive environment with a strong community ethos. Pupils are recognised and celebrated for their individual achievements and the staff work very hard to achieve the best learning experience for every child.'

In the past, pupils have made strong rates of progress in reading and writing by the end of key stage 2, and they continue to do so. The teaching of phonics, reading and writing skills is a strength of the school. However, in 2016, outcomes in mathematics dipped. While this improved slightly in 2017, the progress pupils made from their starting points was still below average. Consequently, although the proportions of pupils who achieved standards expected for their age in mathematics were in line with national figures, fewer than might be expected achieved the higher

standard. This is no longer the case. Recognising the need for improvements, you have restructured leadership, coordinated an ongoing programme of research-based training for teachers and reinvigorated the teaching and learning of mathematics across the school. Current pupils' work evidences that they are making much stronger progress in mathematics than in the past, particularly in the younger year groups. Senior leaders and governors are very aware that these improvements are ongoing and there is more to do to ensure that Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are fully stretched, especially the most able. At the same time, you have continued to improve teaching in reading and writing. As a result, all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make good progress from their starting points. Leaders are now rightly focused on a programme of raising the level of challenge across the wider curriculum.

Leaders ensure that a range of bespoke support is offered to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and that they are supported well. There is a strong sense of teamwork between leaders, teachers and teaching assistants. Parents and carers appreciate the quality of support on offer, with comments such as 'My daughter has thrived at the school' and 'Staff are well trained, very professional and have the child's best interests at heart.'

In lessons, pupils have very positive attitudes, engage well with teachers and teaching assistants and work hard. These strong relationships foster a sense of teamwork and trust. All pupils are encouraged to take pride in their presentation and in making their work the best it can be. Pupils respect each other's ideas and they work and play very well together. Any incidences of poor behaviour are managed well.

Your detailed self-evaluation of the school is carefully considered and accurate. As a result, staff and governors share a pride in the school's strengths and are sharply focused on the areas that the school can improve further. This includes a shared drive to improve standards after a period of staffing turbulence in upper key stage 2. Detailed planning, coupled with regular monitoring, ensures that leaders are taking the right actions to make these improvements. Governors pay regular visits to the school and are kept up to date via leaders' tracking information and reports. Governors have recently recruited new members and have sought training for them. They are actively involved in monitoring activities and supporting school improvements.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You, your staff and governors rightly place an appropriately high emphasis on pupils' safety and welfare. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a caring culture of vigilance, supported by thorough record-keeping. Appropriate checks are made on all adults who work with pupils, and meticulous records are maintained. All staff have up-to-date training to an appropriate level and know what to do if they are worried about a pupil. Governors are well informed and work closely with staff to ensure that the work to keep pupils safe is given top priority and meets current requirements. When it has been necessary, effective

communication between key staff in school and other organisations has ensured timely and effective support for pupils of concern.

Staff, pupils and their parents report that pupils feel safe and well looked after at Binfield. Pupils feel well cared for and told me they know who to go to should they have any concerns. They trust adults to resolve any issues that may arise. Pupils report that they know how to keep themselves safe, including when on the internet.

Pupils' attendance is in line with or above the national average. Leaders promote the value of good attendance well. Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, confirmed that their children are happy and feel safe here.

### **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, as well as evaluating safeguarding arrangements, I focused on specific aspects of the school's provision, including: whether the high levels of progress that pupils make in Reception and key stage 1 have been maintained; how well leaders have responded to address previously weak outcomes in mathematics; the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and how effectively leaders promote good behaviour; and the quality and depth of learning across the wider curriculum.
- In Reception Year, the indoor learning zones offer a very rich range of engaging and stimulating learning opportunities. Children gain confidence from their good relationships with staff and collaborative play with others. Effective tracking systems are used to inform engaging teaching approaches and to map the good progress that children make from their starting points. Consequently, outcomes by the end of Reception Year are high and children are prepared very well for key stage 1. Leaders agree that more effective use of the outdoor learning environment would support even better literacy, number and social-skills development.
- The very well-planned and high-quality teaching of phonics underpins the strong progress that pupils make in reading and writing by the end of key stage 1. Recent work to improve mathematics has ensured that outcomes here are similarly high. The most able pupils are challenged well and a high proportion of pupils achieve a greater depth of understanding. Leaders have worked with the local authority and external consultants to validate their assessments.
- By the end of key stage 2 in 2017, reading and writing outcomes were in line with national averages. However, progress in mathematics was below national figures. Leaders wasted no time in addressing this and current cohorts are making stronger progress. Training for teachers and shared planning have resulted in improved subject knowledge and higher teacher expectations. Teachers have high expectations in English, and pupils are rising to the challenge. Spelling, punctuation and grammar have improved and pupils' books demonstrate some exceptionally high-quality extended writing, particularly in Year 6 and Year 4.
- Leaders have addressed the past underperformance in mathematics well. Improved planning and assessment, together with coaching and training for staff,

have resulted in more rapid progress and higher standards in mathematics across the school. During our visits to lessons, and through our scrutiny of pupils' books, we saw pupils confidently exploring alternative methods of solving mathematical problems. In addition, we saw teachers making opportunities to promote pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills. Although standards have improved, you are aware that more needs to be done to promote deeper thinking and problem-solving in mathematics in upper key stage 2.

- Overall attendance is regularly in line with or slightly above national figures, and leaders take all appropriate actions to maintain this. Historically, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has been below that of their peers. This is changing and the attendance of this group has improved.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and their conduct around the school are very good. They socialise well and some older pupils take responsibility for younger ones. Pupils told me that they feel well cared for by staff, make good friends here and are proud of their school. However, in the past, exclusion rates have been higher than in other schools. School records show that this was due to complex and multiple issues faced by a small number of pupils and these sanctions were used as a last resort. Binfield is a very calm and caring school. Staff ensure that appropriate and timely action is taken to support vulnerable pupils and their families when the need arises.
- The school offers a broad and rich curriculum. Enrichment weeks, the variety of clubs and trips and, most especially, the school's focus on outdoor learning are highly valued by pupils and parents. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well and religious education is a strength of the school. Pupils value the principle of equality and gain a good understanding of different faiths and cultures, supporting them to become well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' books show that mathematics skills are not routinely promoted well across the curriculum and more focus needs to be given to applying extended writing skills in some subject areas. A small minority of teachers do not always offer challenging enough tasks in science and humanities to promote deeper thinking and the development of subject-specific skills. Consequently, progress is good, but not yet as consistently strong across the broader curriculum as it is in English and mathematics.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to embed recent improvements to teaching and learning in mathematics, particularly in upper key stage 2
- the quality of pupils' work and their depth of thinking in science and the wider curriculum are improved
- pupils are given more challenging activities requiring them to apply their writing and mathematical skills in a subject-specific context

- provision in the Reception Year becomes outstanding by making outdoor learning opportunities as rich and stimulating as those that take place indoors.

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 Bracknell Forest. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Newberry  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Meetings were held with you, your deputy headteacher, subject leaders, five members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. Jointly with leaders, I visited classes in each of the year groups to look at teaching and learning. Together we looked at a range of pupils' work in their exercise books. I observed pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtime, and had a meeting with a small group of pupils.

I took into account 105 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as speaking to a number of parents at the beginning of the day. In addition, I considered the views expressed by one parent who contacted Ofsted during the day of the inspection. I took into account the views expressed in 31 responses to a staff survey and 161 responses to the pupil survey. I reviewed a range of documents, including reports from external consultants, minutes of meetings, pupils' progress information and safeguarding policies, procedures and checks.