

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



29 May 2018

Mrs Julia Matson
Headteacher
Barnwood Church of England Primary School
Colin Road
Barnwood
Gloucester
Gloucestershire
GL4 3JP

Dear Mrs Matson

Short inspection of Barnwood Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 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 October 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

The school has experienced considerable changes in staffing, leadership and governance since the previous inspection. You were co-headteacher before taking up your role as substantive headteacher in September 2016. At this time, a new deputy headteacher with responsibility for leading assessment and subsequently writing and phonics joined the school and a lead teacher role was developed within the teaching staff. Together as a leadership team you have accurately identified and are tackling areas of weakness. More recent appointments of new leaders of the early years and special educational needs provision have also strengthened the school's leadership capacity and the pace of school improvement.

Governors are well informed about the school's performance and provide increasingly robust challenge to leaders in order to improve outcomes further. Several recent appointments, as well as improved external training, have improved the governing body. Additionally, external consultants' reviews have helped governors to identify the school's strengths and weaknesses accurately. As a result, their checks on the school's work are more focused. For example, governors now regularly check the rates of progress that groups of pupils make, including in phonics, and also check how well their improvement plans are improving outcomes for pupils.

All the pupils I spoke with told me how much they enjoy school. They like the range of opportunities provided within and beyond the school day including science and mathematics lessons and the many extra-curricular clubs that they can join. They describe relationships between pupils and adults as 'very supportive' and have confidence that teachers will quickly resolve any difficulties that they may experience. Pupils' high levels of attendance reflect their enjoyment of their learning. Around the school, pupils are polite, helpful and attentive in lessons.

Most parents and carers who spoke to me or completed the questionnaire, Parent View, are pleased with the school's provision and the changes leaders are making. However, a small number of parents expressed concerns about communication regarding their children's progress and how effectively the school responds to issues that they raise. Leaders recognise the need to communicate more effectively about pupils' learning and progress, and to regain the confidence of a small number of parents.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to improve teaching by making sure teachers give precise guidance to pupils on how to succeed in their learning. Leaders are taking action to share the best practice in the school, for example in the precise ways that teachers use their assessments to help Year 6 pupils to edit and improve their writing. Leaders know that currently this quality of teaching is not replicated consistently across all classes and subjects, and that there is more to do in this respect.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have made sure that policies, procedures and training relating to safeguarding are up to date and in line with statutory requirements. Vetting checks on staff and visitors to the school are thorough and record-keeping is of a good standard. Staff are well trained to identify risks to pupils' welfare. They have robust systems for referring concerns to school safeguarding leads who in turn take swift action to involve external agencies to support pupils and families. Governors make checks on health and safety and safeguarding matters in school, including by working with leaders to complete the annual local authority review of safeguarding.

Pupils told me that they feel safe in school. They appreciate the work of the school in helping them to stay safe, including on the internet. A few parents expressed concerns about the school's effectiveness in tackling bullying. Pupils I spoke to knew the differences between poor behaviour, arguments between pupils, and bullying. They told me that bullying is very rare and that they have confidence that adults will investigate and resolve issues very quickly. Leaders' records show that they record and review incidents carefully, and have taken swift and effective action to help the very small number of pupils who need support to improve their behaviour. Consequently, the number of fixed-term exclusions has decreased.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry focused on how well leaders are making sure that middle-

attaining pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make enough progress in writing at key stage 2. Over time, too few have reached the standard expected for their age and their progress has been slower than that of most other pupils nationally.

- Year 6 teachers have high expectations and provide pupils with clear guidance on the standards expected for their age, and how to improve their work. As a result, middle-ability pupils' progress is steadily improving. However, this does not fully compensate for pupils' previous progress, which has been too slow across key stage 2. In particular, pupils' handwriting in all classes is often poorly formed, which limits the pace at which they write and the clarity of their work. In addition, weaknesses in the application of spelling, punctuation and grammar all prevent pupils from achieving the standards expected for their age, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Performance information and scrutiny of workbooks across key stage 2 show that some middle-ability pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are still not making enough progress to catch up to the standards expected for their age.
- Next, I explored how successful leaders have been in raising standards in phonics in Reception and in key stage 1.
- You have been effective in tackling pupils' previously poor phonic knowledge. With the support of local authority consultants, you have reviewed the strategies for teaching phonics and provided additional resources and training for staff. Leaders track pupils' knowledge of letters and the sounds they make so that teachers can build on this understanding. In the Reception and key stage 1 classes, teachers manage the needs of groups of pupils more effectively and teaching assistants now have a critical role in teaching and assessing pupils. As a result, most pupils are making strong progress. The numbers of pupils who have already met the standards in Reception and Year 1 have increased to be closer to the national average. Additionally, more pupils are catching up to the standard expected for their age by the end of Year 2.
- Nevertheless, we agreed that reading books are not always matched well enough to pupils' understanding of phonics. This prevents some pupils from making rapid progress, especially those who need to catch up.
- I also looked at the teaching of mathematics because pupils' progress and achievement in mathematics at key stage 2 have been inconsistent in recent years.
- Leaders have reviewed the way mathematics is taught so that teachers plan more challenging tasks to help pupils to build their mathematical knowledge and to think more deeply. In Years 5 and 6, middle-ability pupils regularly solve, explain and justify their answers to more complex problems. As a result, their progress is improving steadily, and the proportion of pupils achieving the standard expected by the end of key stage 2 is improving towards the national average.
- Leaders recognise that improvements to teaching are not yet embedded across all classes. We agreed that although teachers' expectations have risen, sometimes their assessments of what pupils know and understand are not used well enough to plan effective teaching. This leads to slower progress by middle-

ability pupils across key stage 2. We agreed that teachers' use of assessment in mathematics should improve, so that middle-attaining learners receive the right levels of challenge and further diminish the gaps in their knowledge.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils across key stage 2 make consistently good progress in writing, teachers raise their expectations and strengthen the focus on improving pupils' spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting
- middle-attaining pupils across key stage 2 make at least good progress in mathematics
- teachers provide those who need to catch up in phonics with the right support so that they reach the expected standards, including in the early years
- communication with parents about the progress pupils are making is improved.

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

Yours sincerely

Claire Mirams
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I held meetings with you and your leadership team. We reviewed your plans for improvement, information on current pupils' progress and your own evaluation of the school's performance. I conducted learning walks with leaders and heard pupils read together with the early years leader. I also met with members of the governing body and scrutinised minutes of governing body meetings.

I met with leaders who are responsible for standards in mathematics, writing and reading, and reviewed records of their plans and checks on teaching. I met with a group of pupils and discussed their viewpoints on the curriculum, behaviour, bullying and keeping safe, including online. I scrutinised various safeguarding records and current information about school attendance. I reviewed the school's behaviour records and records of exclusions. I spoke to representatives of Gloucestershire local authority in person and on the telephone, as well as meeting with the director of education for the Diocese of Gloucester.

I also considered 31 responses to the pupil survey, 24 responses to the staff survey and 55 parent responses to the online survey, Parent View.