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Mrs Sue Sanderson
Headteacher
Barwick-in-Elmet Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
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Dear Mrs Sanderson

Short inspection of Barwick-in-Elmet Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 September 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 December 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have continued to cultivate a school in which every pupil is valued. You, your staff team and governors ensure that the school is a happy and caring community underpinned by Christian values.

You lead the school with clear determination and passion to see pupils engage in learning and make good progress from their starting points. You know the strengths of the school and have a clear understanding of what you need to develop further. You are ably supported by two assistant headteachers and a wider leadership team whose members share your vision and ambition for pupils at the school. You have created a strong sense of teamwork and staff morale is high. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the experiences it gives their children. Leaders, governors, staff, pupils and parents all contribute to making Barwick-in-Elmet Primary School a good and improving school.

Governors provide strong support for the school and act as effective critical friends. They know the strengths of the school and work well with school leaders to drive improvements. Governors have a range of relevant skills and experiences which they use to good effect to support the work of the school.

You are rightly proud of the success you have had in improving the quality of teaching and the positive impact this is having on learning. You have, over time,

established a strong team of teachers and support staff who work tirelessly to provide a good-quality education for pupils at the school. Reading standards in particular, especially in key stage 2, have rapidly improved to well above average as a result of a concerted effort by leaders and staff to raise achievement in this subject. Evidence from pupils' books and leaders' assessment information indicates that standards in writing and mathematics are also improving for pupils currently in the school.

Since the last inspection, you and your staff have become more outward looking. You have become part of an alliance of schools that are like-minded in their approach to improving the learning experiences for pupils in their schools. Leaders and staff in the alliance work in close collaboration with each other to share good practice and improve teaching and learning.

Pupils are cheerful and polite. They love coming to school and attendance has been consistently above the national average over several years. In lessons, they work hard and have excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils get on well with each other and relationships between pupils and adults are positive.

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to ensure that boys make similar good progress as girls do in writing. Although girls are still making stronger progress than boys, the differences are diminishing. Evidence from pupils' books and the schools' own assessment information shows that standards in writing are improving for all pupils currently in the school.

Inspectors also asked you to extend pupils' understanding of cultural diversity. Governors have challenged leaders to ensure that this is addressed successfully. Through the curriculum, school visits, special events and visitors to the school, pupils have good opportunities to learn about other cultures. Pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 learn to speak Spanish as a modern foreign language. The school's involvement in the alliance is providing opportunities for pupils to explore characteristics of British society beyond their own village setting.

Recommendations from the previous inspection also urged leaders to increase the range of challenge and expectation for those pupils who are most able. Leaders' work to address this issue has been highly successful in reading. The proportion of pupils attaining higher standards in writing has also improved over time. However, you have rightly identified that too few pupils, including those pupils who are most able, are not attaining the high standards of which they are capable in mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The designated safeguarding leader makes sure that staff fully understand their duties and follow systems and procedures for logging concerns. Referrals are dealt with in a timely manner and concerns are diligently followed up to make sure that pupils are kept safe. Staff attend regular, up-to-date training to ensure that they and members of the governing body understand the current guidance. When necessary,

you work with other agencies in order to secure support for pupils and families. You maintain an accurate record of the employment and background checks carried out on all staff and other adults in the school.

Overwhelmingly, parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire felt that their children feel safe at school and are well looked after. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, such as when using the internet.

Inspection findings

- Leadership of the school is a strength. You have successfully nurtured a leadership team that shows determination and a real desire to improve pupils' learning experiences further. Its members share your high aspirations and have been instrumental in the many improvements made in the school since the last inspection.
- I wanted to determine what actions leaders have taken that have resulted in rapidly improved reading outcomes in key stage 2. Your subject leader for English has completely revitalised the reading curriculum in a determination to improve standards across the school. The journey that the school has taken to reach the current high standards in reading is considerable. This includes a significant investment in reading resources, a different approach to teaching reading based on research, and high-quality professional development for staff.
- Over time, the rapid increase in reading standards has not been seen in writing and mathematics in key stage 2. However, evidence from pupils' books and observations of learning shows that standards in these two subjects are now improving. The school's internal data shows a high proportion of current pupils attaining the expected standard at least in writing and mathematics; these assessments are supported by work in pupils' books.
- I also wanted to investigate why reading standards in key stage 1 are not as strong as in key stage 2, especially for those pupils working at the higher standard. Inspection evidence shows that the provision for reading in key stage 1 is effective, which is having a positive impact on standards. The most recent assessment information is showing that the proportion of pupils attaining the higher standard in reading at the end of Year 2 has rapidly improved on previous outcomes.
- Finally, I explored what leaders are doing to increase the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard in mathematics at the end of key stage 2. Over time, outcomes at the higher standard have been below average in key stage 2, and the most recent assessment information shows further decline. You and your leaders have implemented detailed plans to address this. Evidence in current pupils' workbooks shows that this is being done successfully and standards in mathematics are improving across the school. However, you acknowledge that these plans have yet to improve the proportion of pupils attaining the higher standard in mathematics in key stage 2.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans to improve standards in mathematics are firmly embedded so a greater proportion of pupils in key stage 2 attain higher standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Alan Chaffey
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the school's designated safeguarding leader and subject leaders for English and mathematics. I also met with two members of the governing body. I spoke with pupils informally during lunchtime and when listening to some pupils read. I made short visits to classrooms with you and looked at a range of pupils' books. I scrutinised various documents, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans and safeguarding documents. I considered the five responses to Ofsted's online staff survey, the 64 responses to Parent View, and the 62 free-text responses to Parent View.