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Mrs Karen Banford  
Headteacher  
Great Witley CofE Primary School  
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WR6 6HR

Dear Mrs Banford

### **Short inspection of Great Witley CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 5 February 2019, 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 June 2013.

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

You and the leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Together, you have ensured that Great Witley CofE Primary School, underpinned by its distinctive Christian ethos, remains a happy and purposeful place to learn. It is achieving its aim of 'inspiring a lifelong love of learning'.

You have established a very effective leadership team. Senior leaders, members of the school improvement board and staff share your clear vision and determination to ensure that every member of staff is supported to provide the highest quality of education for every pupil. You have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development and are taking decisive action to address any areas that fall short of your high expectations. An example of this is the improvements you and your leadership team have made to the quality of teaching in Reception, following a decline in the proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2016 and 2017. These improvements contributed to more children achieving a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year in 2018.

Staff and pupils are happy and proud of their school. During the inspection, pupils were keen to share their learning experiences. They could clearly explain what they were learning about and demonstrated an enjoyment in learning. They are polite and well mannered, and their conduct around the school is exemplary. Your learning ambassadors were extremely helpful in explaining all about their respective classes and the exciting topics they had been learning about.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement recommended in your previous Ofsted inspection. In order to strengthen senior leadership, you appointed two new assistant headteachers, who are responsible for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school. This has helped to improve teaching, so that more of it is now consistently good and outstanding.

Since the previous inspection, the school has become an academy and is now part of the Rivers CofE Multi-Academy Trust. You are proactive in using the support provided by the trust. For example, teachers receive high-quality training and support and the opportunity to share good practice across the other schools in the trust. In addition, the governance provided by the school improvement board is highly effective. Members of the board have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are supportive of the school's work and provide robust challenge to ensure that the school continues to improve. This support and challenge have contributed strongly to the continuous improvement of the school.

In 2017, progress made by pupils in key stage 2 in reading was behind that made in writing and mathematics. You and your leadership team have analysed the reasons for this and made improvements to the way in which reading is taught. Evidence from your assessment information shows that these improvements are beginning to have an impact on improving standards in reading. Although improving, there is still more to be done to ensure that the progress made by pupils in reading matches the strong progress made in writing and mathematics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements, and the school website contains the required information. The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a good quality. Appropriate procedures are followed during the recruitment of staff. As designated safeguarding lead, you have established a strong safeguarding culture. You ensure that all staff and school improvement board members regularly undertake appropriate, up-to-date training. Your staff are knowledgeable about the procedures for keeping children safe and recognise that they have a collective responsibility to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for.

Pupils say they feel safe in the school. Parents and carers agree. You seek support and advice from external agencies where necessary, and referrals are made in a timely way. This ensures that vulnerable pupils and their families are well supported.

Pupils demonstrate a clear knowledge and understanding of some of the potential risks they face and how to avoid them. The older pupils I spoke to were very clear about how to stay safe when using the internet. They have a strong understanding of the range of different types of bullying and what to do if it happens to them. They say bullying in the school is rare, and the school's behaviour logs support this.

### **Inspection findings**

- When they enter the school in Reception, children demonstrate skills and abilities that

are broadly typical for their age. They make strong progress through Reception, developing skills well across the early years curriculum. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year is above the national average.

- You acted effectively after the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development declined in the past. Using your monitoring and evaluation systems, you were able to identify the reasons for this and implement the necessary improvements to teaching in Reception. You improved the leadership of the early years and made changes to the curriculum and environment to ensure that children were able to demonstrate greater independence in their learning. You also improved the teaching of phonics. As a result, teaching in Reception improved and in 2018 pupils' progress was greater than the national average.
- Children engage well with their activities, are highly motivated and demonstrate very positive learning behaviours. Practitioners are knowledgeable about the requirements of the early years curriculum and children's next steps for learning. Consequently, children achieve well and are happy learners.
- Pupils continue to make strong progress through key stage 1 and, by the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is higher than the national average. In addition, the percentage of pupils achieving greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 is improving steadily.
- The quality of teaching and learning is consistently strong across the school. Work in pupils' books shows that teaching is appropriately matched to their needs and is sufficiently challenging. Pupils are well supported in lessons, because teachers use questioning very effectively to ensure that pupils have a secure grasp of their learning. Pupils' attitudes to learning are extremely positive. They engage confidently and enthusiastically during lessons.
- Progress data for 2017 and 2018 shows that there are differences in the progress made by pupils in different prior-attainment groups. For example, in 2017 pupils from the middle prior-attainment group did not make as much progress in reading, writing and mathematics as pupils from the higher prior-attainment group. In 2018, pupils from the middle prior-attainment group did not make as much progress as higher prior-attainment group pupils in reading and writing. You are aware of this and are continuing to monitor the progress made by pupils from all prior-attainment groups to ensure that all pupils make the progress they are capable of. Your assessment information shows that current pupils in all prior-attainment groups are making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Key stage 2 progress data for 2017 and 2018 shows that pupils did not make as much progress in reading as they did in writing and mathematics. You responded to this by reviewing the way in which reading is taught. You have implemented a number of initiatives to raise the profile of reading, including improving the leadership of English, including that of reading. In particular, you identified that pupils needed to improve their comprehension skills and understanding of the higher-order use of language. Teaching in reading now addresses these gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. In order to ensure that pupils develop these important skills from an early age, you have also made improvements to the reading curriculum in Reception and key stage 1.

- Your assessment information shows that the proportion of pupils making the progress required of them in reading has increased as a result of the improvements you have implemented. In addition, the proportion of pupils making strong progress is increasing across the school. You recognise that there is still more to be done in order to ensure that progress in reading matches the high standards seen in writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 and you have effective plans in place to address this.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- standards in reading continue to improve, so that the progress made by pupils in reading matches the strong progress made in writing and mathematics
- improvements in teaching in the early years continue, so that the proportion of children exceeding the expected level of development by the end of their Reception Year increases further.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the school improvement board and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Worcester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Worcestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Janet Satchwell  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I visited every classroom with you. I examined a wide range of documentation, including the school development plan, the school's self-evaluation document and records of safeguarding. Throughout the inspection I held discussions with you and your senior leadership team. I met with two members of the school improvement board – the previous and current chair. I considered 49 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, including 38 comments sent via free text. I spoke to pupils and observed their behaviour throughout the school day. I reviewed the school's website.