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Mrs A Collins  
Headteacher  
St Bartholomew's CofE (C) School  
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Dear Mrs Collins

### **Short inspection of St Bartholomew's CofE (C) School**

Following my visit to the school on 26 January 2016, 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 November 2010.

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

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment in April 2014, you have taken action to ensure that good teaching, learning and assessment have continued to lead to good outcomes for pupils.

Teaching in the school is characterised by careful planning, which provides appropriate challenge for pupils of all abilities. Teachers and the teaching assistant work well together and have a clear overview of pupils' learning. Tasks are often personalised and give pupils the opportunity to work both independently and collaboratively to solve problems. This is particularly the case in mathematics and science.

Outdoor spaces are used well to help the pupils learn. The outdoor classroom and the markings on the playground provide useful learning opportunities and are enjoyed by all pupils. Children in the early years play with older pupils in the playground and they are given many planned opportunities to learn through outdoor play in lessons.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance has been consistently well above the national average over the last three years. As there are such small numbers on roll, illness led to a decline in the overall figure last term but attendance is now back to its exceptionally high level.

Behaviour is extremely positive in class and around the school. Pupils are kind, considerate and polite. They told me that behaviour is good and that they feel safe in school.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection and you have been well supported by the governing body and all staff to take effective action to maintain strengths and address areas for improvement. For example, you have developed the school's values and ethos and introduced more robust structures to improve all aspects of the school's work. You are now taking well informed action to improve teaching further in order to secure outstanding outcomes for all pupils.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Up-to-date policies, which make reference to the most recent guidance, are implemented, and staff have received appropriate information and training about keeping children safe. Although no concerns have arisen, all staff know what to do if any should arise.

As the school has a culture for keeping children safe, parents and staff, as well as the pupils, believe that the school is a safe environment which helps children keep themselves safe. Pupils are taught about e-safety, 'stranger-danger' and how to keep themselves safe around water, fire, traffic and animals. Staff have also had training on preventing extremism.

### **Inspection findings**

- You and governors know the school well. You have high expectations of staff and pupils and demonstrate the capacity to improve the school further.
- School leaders use the arrangements for managing staff performance to set appropriate targets and reward good quality teaching based on pupils' performance. Targets are linked to the teachers' standards and encourage training and development.
- Staff told me that their training needs are met and that they are encouraged to improve their practice.
- There is some highly effective teaching in the school. Often activities build upon each other and reinforce prior learning. However, the quality of work produced in the afternoon does not always match that produced in the morning.
- Outcomes are good and standards improve against national averages as pupils move through the school. However, current pupils do not achieve as well in mathematics as they do in reading and writing.

- Teachers know their pupils well and communicate with each other about the progress that pupils are making. However, they do not meet regularly so opportunities to share best practice and have detailed discussions about individual pupils are missed.
- Information about pupils' progress is accurate and used to set targets and measure progress. However, the assessment system is not fully embedded so it is yet to have maximum impact.
- The curriculum provides a range of subjects designed to deepen pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Learning in English, mathematics, science, humanities, Spanish, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education, music and religious education is complemented by extra-curricular activities such as sewing, computing, cooking, gardening and art. These after-school clubs are very well attended.
- Staff promote healthy eating and sporting activities. All pupils receive specialist coaching from an outside provider, they go swimming regularly and many take part in cross-country running and tennis. Leaders have used primary sports funding well to increase participation in a wider range of activities.
- Learning is centred on promoting the school's values of imagination, kindness, joy, respect, inquisitiveness, confidence, courage and independence. These, along with the school's Christian ethos, promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and further their understanding of fundamental British values.
- Tolerance, respect, individual liberty, democracy and the rule of law are all actively promoted. For example, pupils have held elections, they have visited different places of worship, and they have studied civil, criminal and religious law, met with the local MP and visited London. Reflections on such activities are contained within the school newsletter. Activities, such as giving pupils opportunities to use public transport, develop their self-confidence in the wider community.
- Staff promote equality of opportunity and diversity exceptionally well. Unkindness is extremely rare and pupils are confident that any problems will be dealt with if they arise.
- Pupils conduct themselves well, they enjoy positive relationships with the staff and each other and older pupils take care of younger children. All pupils have lunch together, they sit around one table with members of staff and good manners are developed. This gives the school the feel of an extended family.

- Parents are very positive about the school. They value the close working relationship with staff and feel that their children are well taught, make good progress and that they are safe.
- School leaders have developed effective partnerships with the nursery, which shares the same site, other schools and the Leek Education Partnership. These relationships have led to the sharing of facilities and best practice in order to improve the educational experience of pupils in the school.
- Children in the early years enjoy good teaching in a safe environment. The range of subjects provides varied and imaginative experiences, leading to good rates of progress. However, due to the design of the building, it is difficult for children to initiate their own learning outside of the classroom. This restricts their developing independence.
- Governors provide high-quality support and challenge to you, as the headteacher. They ensure that the effective deployment of staff and resources, including primary sports funding, secures good outcomes for pupils. However, the school website does not communicate up-to-date information about all aspects of the school's work.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school. They have commissioned input to develop mathematics and early years provision and they have facilitated support for you from a more experienced head of a small school. The local authority link officer also has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

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

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the quality of work produced in the afternoon lessons is of a similar standard to that produced in the morning
- effective action is taken to improve outcomes in mathematics so that they match those in reading and writing
- the assessment system is embedded so that it clearly shows the progress that pupils are making and informs action.

Yours sincerely

Simon Mosley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, both teachers, the office manager, two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and two parents. I had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority and I spoke informally to almost all pupils.

We made three short visits to lessons, where I observed learning and looked at pupils' work. I evaluated recent information on pupils' progress and scrutinised other records about keeping pupils safe, their behaviour and attendance. I also looked at the minutes of meetings of the governing body, staff training records and information about managing teachers' performance.