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Ms Nicola Ball  
Acting Headteacher  
Misterton Church of England First School  
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Dear Ms Ball

### **Short inspection of Misterton Church of England First School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 March 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 October 2010.

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

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

The federation between Misterton Church of England First School and Ashlands Church of England First School is working successfully. As the deputy headteacher based at Ashlands Church of England First School, you have a good knowledge of both schools. However, following the executive headteacher's absence and subsequent resignation, you have taken on the role of leading the federation and being the acting headteacher at Misterton Church of England First School until a substantive headteacher is appointed. This you are doing exceptionally well as the school continues to flourish.

Your leadership skills are recognised and acknowledged by your colleagues, the governors, parents and pupils. You are held in very high regard by all members of the school's community. Staff comment that they enjoy working at the school with you. They appreciate the positive school ethos, which is clearly evident.

The newly formed governing body, for the federation, is providing strong leadership and is supporting the school through a challenging period in its development. The governors work hard on behalf of the school to ensure its continuing success. They are very strong advocates for the school.

Working with the governing body, you have a clear understanding of the school's current position. The areas identified for improvement during the previous Ofsted inspection have been resolved successfully and the current plans for further improvement are appropriate and focus on relevant priorities. There is a strong determination that the school will go from strength to strength.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Throughout the school, there is a strong and appropriate focus on ensuring pupils' safety. All staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. Although the executive headteacher, as the school's designated safeguarding lead, is absent, you are providing the necessary support for staff to carry out their safeguarding duties. You are being ably supported by your colleagues and the governor with responsibility for overseeing the school's safeguarding procedures.

All staff have completed relevant training to ensure that they are familiar with all types of child protection and safeguarding priorities. They have recently undertaken training to raise their awareness of the government's 'Prevent' programme, which is designed to protect pupils from the risk of radicalisation.

The school is well maintained and there are appropriate systems in place to ensure pupils' safety. For example, regular fire drills are held to ensure that everyone knows what to do in the event of having to evacuate the building quickly.

The school monitors pupils' safety very carefully. Detailed records are kept about all incidents that arise, which helps staff to monitor pupils' development. As a consequence, parents are confident that staff know their children well and take good care of them while they are at school.

### **Inspection findings**

- There is a strong determination from all who work with and support the school for it to succeed. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of those areas that need further improvement. The school development plan highlights the current priorities, which include strengthening pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and ensuring that there is a culture of high expectations across the school. The governors play an instrumental role in maintaining progress towards each priority. The governing body is led very well by the chair. He has a very clear oversight of the school's work and what needs to happen next. He is keen to ensure that governors are able to evaluate the impact of each initiative on pupils' development. To do so, he recognises that the current targets that are used to check on the progress being made need to be sharper.
- Standards are rising across the school. Since the previous inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 remained slightly lower than the national average. In 2015, Key Stage 1 pupils achieved higher than average results and those who left at the end of Year 4 were well prepared for the next stage of their education. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher

levels in the Year 2 assessments demonstrate that the most able pupils are being challenged and enabled to achieve their full potential. Although there are very few disadvantaged pupils at the school, this group also make good progress and achieve in line with other pupils at the school. The school's assessment information indicates that current pupils are doing well and that standards will be higher than average at the end of the year. Nevertheless, staff are not complacent. They recognise that there are a few pupils who are not making the academic progress expected. The school's approach to support these pupils is showing some success. The behaviour of these pupils has improved recently and they are engaging productively in the different lessons, which is helping them to experience success while learning.

- There is a strong focus on ensuring that pupils benefit from high-quality lessons. The monitoring of teaching is rigorous. Teachers and teaching assistants are also supported well to ensure that they can improve their work and support pupils' learning. The links between both schools in the federation provide good opportunities for staff to work together in a larger group to discuss different aspects of teaching and to learn from one another.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together very well. Teachers plan in great detail to ensure that adults working in the classroom are well briefed and have a clear understanding of their role working with individual or groups of pupils. Teachers also ensure that pupils are clear about what is expected from them. They have high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. Pupils enjoy the challenges being set and experience satisfaction as they make progress.
- School leaders previously prioritised the need to improve the quality of the early years' provision. As a result, the classroom and outdoor area provide Reception children and Year 1 pupils with a high-quality learning space. The improvements taking place in this class are increasing children's rate of learning. For example, in 2014 and 2015, the proportion of Reception children achieving a good level of development was higher than the national average. Similarly, the proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics (sounds that letters make) screening check has improved to be above the national average.
- The governing body's decision to restructure the school and reduce the number of classes from three to two has proved successful. The atmosphere for learning in both classrooms is harmonious, with pupils applying themselves to the different tasks set. The extra space that has been provided by releasing a classroom is used very well for pupils to work together in smaller groups.
- Pupils enjoy being at school. They have positive attitudes to learning and talk confidently about their recent and current work. They particularly enjoy opportunities for completing practical activities, such as building a diorama of a rainforest to show how the different layers, from the tree canopy to the

forest floor, influence one another. Pupils in Year 2 and above also enjoy learning to play the violin. The curriculum is further enhanced by visits to places of interest, such as Wells Cathedral and Corfe Castle, which provide pupils with first-hand learning experiences.

- Pupils benefit from being given opportunities to take responsibilities around the school. They also particularly enjoy raising funds for different charities and participating in special events, such as World Book Day, which support their personal development. However, some opportunities are not being promoted sufficiently to develop pupils' understanding of British values. For example, the school council has not met since October 2015 and those pupils who are members are unsure of their role.
- Pupils behave well. During lessons, they work together sensibly and cooperate with one another while discussing their work. When lessons finish, pupils tidy away workbooks and resources so that the room is ready for the next activity. As soon as they start school, Reception children are taught basic safety skills, such as how to use scissors safely. As a result of the strong focus on helping pupils to enjoy learning, pupils arrive promptly and their attendance levels are higher than the national average.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- set challenging targets for the school's future development that build on the current successes
- sharpen the success criteria that are being used to evaluate the impact of the school's improvement priorities
- are confident that opportunities to promote British values are being used successfully to ensure that pupils learn about democracy and understand how society works.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Bath and Wells, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Somerset County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ken Buxton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met you, the staff and three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. I held telephone conversations with the school's educational consultant and a parent. During the day, you and I visited every classroom to observe teaching and to see pupils at work. We also joined a school assembly and I met with a group of pupils to discuss their views about the school. In addition, I reviewed information about pupils' progress and other relevant school documentation, including minutes of recent governing body meetings and numerous reports about the school's effectiveness. I also scrutinised a wide range of the school's safeguarding documentation and records. In addition, I took account of the views of a small group of parents and considered the written responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Although there were too few parental responses to the individual questions on Parent View for me to take into account, I did note the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.