

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



27 October 2016

Mr Tom Baskerville  
Headteacher  
Monks Risborough CofE Primary School  
Peters Lane  
Princes Risborough  
Buckinghamshire  
HP27 9LZ

Dear Mr Baskerville

### **Short inspection of Monks Risborough CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 October 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 March 2012.

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

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

Since the previous inspection and following the previous headteacher's departure in December 2014, the school has experienced substantial change. Following your appointment in January 2015, you have adjusted staffing appropriately, determined to ensure that staff are working to their strengths. Some staff are new to the school, while others have changed year groups and responsibilities. In addition, at the beginning of your tenure, you have spent time wisely, forging a strong and committed leadership team, who now meet more regularly. Governors, the local authority, parents, staff and pupils alike express high levels of confidence in your leadership. All share in your strong commitment to ensuring that Monks Risborough Primary School continues to improve.

You have set about raising expectations and in doing so involved fully the whole school community. The school's mantra of 'all learning together' underpins your vision wholeheartedly. You have made important gains, set alongside a thorough understanding of each pupil's needs. As a result, standards of achievement have risen and the quality of teaching is improving. Unvalidated information shows that more children achieved a good level of development at the end of the early years in 2016. Standards have also risen in key stage 1 as more children met the standard expected in the Year 1 phonics check in 2016. Pupils make good progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics. Revitalising the school's curriculum,

introducing new assessment systems, assuring the accuracy of the information gathered and improving the quality of mathematics teaching are among telling examples of how this school has moved forward in recent times.

At the previous inspection, inspectors asked the school to accelerate the progress that pupils make, particularly in mathematics. You and your leadership team have worked hard to ensure that there is greater consistency in the quality of teaching overall, including in mathematics. Teachers have strong and secure subject knowledge and exploit this to good effect, asking probing questions that encourage pupils to explain their thinking in depth. Teachers pay close attention to ensuring that tasks are well matched to pupils' starting points. They plan activities thoughtfully and ensure that the level of challenge is just right for all ability groups. As a result, pupils quickly master new skills and make good progress. The teaching of writing has also improved. Pupils now have more opportunities to write in a range of styles and for different purposes. They understand how to improve their work and try hard. This is consistently evident in pupils' presentation, which is of a particularly high standard across the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have worked diligently to strengthen many aspects of the school's approach to keeping children safe. Improvements to the school's perimeter fencing, the installation of closed-circuit television and an improved signing-in system for visitors have all contributed positively to ensuring that pupils are safe and secure. Furthermore, the school's website includes some helpful information for families, such as links to an organisation who promote staying safe online. However, there is some slippage in ensuring that key policies, such as the school's e-safety policy, are kept under regular review.

You know each of your pupils and keep a close eye on their well-being, especially those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. You have strengthened the school's record-keeping by organising records much more efficiently than in the past. Staff are fully conversant with recent changes to the government's guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education'. You and your staff are alert to concerns and act promptly to ensure that the right agencies are contacted to offer appropriate support. For example, if you become concerned about a particular pupil's attendance, you know how to report your concerns and follow the government's 'Children missing education' guidance.

The school provides a caring and nurturing environment that both pupils and parents hold in high regard. Parents report positively about the care their children receive, especially when joining the school. Ensuring that everyone feels safe and happy at Monks Risborough Primary School is of top priority. For example, during the inspection children in the Reception class behaved confidently, following the school's routines well and looking very at home in their relatively new environment.

Pupils who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire and those spoken to during the

inspection agree that they feel safe at school. They show every confidence in the adults who care for them. Strengths in friendships are highly evident and pupils particularly enjoy opportunities to work alongside pupils in other age groups from time to time.

## **Inspection findings**

- The monitoring of the quality of teaching is very thorough. Following an unstable year, with some year groups experiencing a change of teacher, recent appointments have stabilised the staffing structure. Teachers, including those at an early stage of their career, are supported well by senior leaders; they are well versed in leaders' expectations. This ensures that there are high levels of consistency from class to class.
- Leaders have ensured that the information they gather about how well pupils are learning is more accurate than in the past. You have established a robust cycle of moderation, including between local schools. As a result, the information gathered is now more precise and provides a useful benchmark for you and your governors to appraise school performance shrewdly. Consequently, leaders and governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. School improvement planning targets the right areas and contributes effectively to the school's ethos of prioritising continual improvement.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils' individual needs, including average-ability pupils and those who are disadvantaged, are catered for well. Staff use assessment information adeptly to plan tasks that are sharply matched to pupils' starting points. When pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, need extra support, such as help to master a new concept, teaching assistants offer high-quality guidance – enabling pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers ask pertinent and well-considered questions. It is commonplace to hear teachers asking their pupils to explain their reasoning. Pupils respond confidently.
- Leaders have worked hard to overhaul the school's curriculum and ensure that it captures pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Teachers plan exciting and engaging topics. During the inspection, pupils were captivated by participating in a birds of prey talk. They used the experience to spark their ideas for writing tasks at an age-appropriate level. Children in Reception were able to use emergent writing skills to practise the letter 'b' and older pupils enjoyed researching birds like the kookaburra to write informative non-chronological reports.
- The English leader has made well-judged changes to the teaching of writing. Following a pupil survey, there is a greater emphasis on structuring writing more carefully. This was notable in key stage 1 where pupils experienced high levels of success organising their ideas by theme in order to create fact files.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. The school's curriculum and highly skilled teaching allows pupils to explore mathematical concepts and

solve problems confidently. For example, during the inspection Year 6 pupils investigated prime, abundant and deficient numbers. Pupils were able to work systematically and spot patterns accurately.

- Pupils exhibit very positive attitudes to learning. A purposeful and calm working atmosphere permeates the school. Pupils are supported extremely well and make good use of practical resources, prompts on display around the classroom and highly skilled teaching assistants to maintain a forward momentum with their learning.
- Since the previous inspection, staff have worked hard to develop the school's approaches, particularly towards target-setting. Pupils now know what is expected and work hard to achieve the high expectations set for them.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, achieve well. Many achieve as well as their peers by the end of key stage 1 as they make rapid progress from their starting points. By the end of key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils outperform others nationally. Leaders and governors regularly review this group's progress and attainment. However, governors are yet to evaluate fully the difference that additional funding is making to the school's success.
- Attendance is improving. Leaders take appropriate action when attendance becomes a concern.
- Recent changes to leadership in the early years have had a notable impact. Unvalidated information in 2016 shows that standards are rising and more children are ready to start Year 1 with the skills and understanding appropriate for their age. Girls and boys do equally well.
- Parents speak highly of the good levels of communication between home and school. They feel staff are approachable and supportive. However, the school's website is not used well enough to strengthen further lines of communication. It does not comply with the Department for Education's statutory requirements. Some information is missing such as details about how the school plans to spend additional funding this year, full curriculum information for all year groups in all subjects and the school's accessibility plan.
- The majority of parents who expressed a view through Parent view, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were highly satisfied with all aspects of the school. Parents are quick to praise the school's provision for special educational needs and/or disabilities, the appealing curriculum, the commitment of teaching staff and the headteacher's positive impact on standards, among many other aspects.
- Pupils speak very positively about their enjoyment of school because of the opportunities afforded to them. They appreciate particularly the wide menu of additional activities such as the school's gardening club, as well as musical and sporting opportunities. They also talk animatedly about the wide range of trips and visits including the comprehensive programme of residential outdoor activities.
- The school's values are promoted well. This term, pupils are working on the theme of community. Pupils enjoy regular opportunities to apply

values to their everyday lives, such as working closely with parent volunteers during the school's writing days or working with different age groups on special curriculum days. This ensures that pupils are able to experience first-hand school values in action, and then apply them successfully to their day-to-day activities.

- Governors monitor the school's work closely. They are clear on where priorities lie and gather first-hand information regularly, such as by meeting with the English and mathematics leaders, to inform their discussions. Governors make good use of assessment information to ask challenging questions.
- The local authority has provided helpful support, particularly to new leaders. Officers have worked closely with you, other relatively inexperienced leaders and provided helpful training to new governors. This means that despite such far-reaching changes to school personnel, standards seen at the previous inspection have been maintained. In close partnership, the headteacher, local authority, senior leaders and governors, have established a strong, forward momentum and all are demonstrating sound capacity to improve the school further.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's website is kept up to date systematically and contains all statutorily required information
- school policies are kept under regular review and updated to reflect the latest guidance.

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Farr  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, other staff with significant responsibilities, two governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority. I also met with six pupils in key stage 2. I took account of the 120 responses to the online pupil survey. I observed learning in all classes, all jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. I scrutinised pupils' work together with the mathematics and

English leaders and the governor who holds responsibility for English. I took account of 86 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and one letter received from a parent. I also took account of the views of 16 members of the school team who responded to the online survey for staff. I analysed a range of school documentation, including information about pupils' achievement, the school improvement plan and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. We discussed your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness.