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Mrs Jane Bailey  
Headteacher  
East Harptree Church of England VC Primary School  
Church Lane  
East Harptree  
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Dear Mrs Bailey

### **Short inspection of East Harptree Church of England VC Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 2 February 2017, 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 April 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You and your staff promote a kind and homely atmosphere where pupils feel comfortable and happy, and enjoy their learning. However, this family feel does not compromise the high expectations you and your staff have for the pupils. You have managed a high staff turnover well and the freshness of approach among the staff is considered by parents to be a 'great asset'. As one parent commented, 'Mrs Bailey and her team are very approachable and the ethos of the school is delightful. The dedication of the staff is apparent.' You and your governors work well together and demonstrate a shared and ambitious vision for the future of the school. You share a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and your self-evaluation is accurate. Consequently you have secured sustained improvement.

At the time of the previous inspection the school was asked to improve the challenge for the most able pupils and ensure that governors checked that girls were doing as well as boys. You now make sure that all groups of pupils are working at a level that stretches them. The most able pupils are set tasks that require them to consolidate their learning by using their skills and applying them to solve problems. Teachers ask the most able pupils challenging questions and this extends their thinking. The individual support given to the most able disadvantaged pupils helps them to gain confidence in their learning. A significant proportion of governors are new to their role but bring with them

expertise and professional challenge. They have quickly become familiar with the systems that the school uses to track the progress of all groups of pupils. This enables them to check and challenge any anomalies in the progress of individual pupils.

At the time of the previous inspection the school was also asked to ensure that teachers marked pupils' work in a way which helped them to improve their learning. Teachers consistently follow the school marking policy. They also provide pupils with targets to improve their work and give them time to reflect on what they need to do to improve their learning. This has had a strong impact on improving the progress that they make.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is of paramount importance to all staff and governors and you ensure that they are kept up to date with all the required training. You and your staff know your pupils and their families very well and are quick to spot any problems, including unusual patterns of behaviour or attendance. Any concerns are swiftly investigated and specialist agencies involved when required. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Pupils report that they feel very safe and explain that they can approach any adult in the school if they have a worry or concern. They demonstrate an impressive knowledge of keeping safe when using information technology and are very clear about the reasons why access to the internet in school is restricted. All parents who responded to the online inspection questionnaire reported that their children felt safe at school and were well looked after and nurtured. As one parent explained, the school provides their children 'with a safe environment in which to learn'.

### **Inspection findings**

- The Year 6 national test results in mathematics for 2016 highlighted that too many pupils had not made the progress they were capable of. I explored what you and your teachers were doing to remedy this and checked to see if current pupils were making better progress. You have introduced a new mathematics programme of work which enables teachers to systematically teach the knowledge and skills that the pupils need to learn as they move through the school. By revamping your calculation policy and sharing it with parents, you have made sure that it is clearly understood by all members of the school community. Teachers relish the opportunities you give them to participate in professional development, and this is supporting improvements in the teaching of mathematics. It has sharpened their skills and raised teacher expectations of what the pupils can achieve. You make good use of your mixed age group classes to plan mathematical activities for all the different ability groups, including the most able, middle attainers and those who need to develop more confidence in this subject. The most able pupils,

including those who are disadvantaged, thrive on solving complex mathematical problems. Others less confident are supported well in their learning by more structured tasks which help develop their skills. Teachers are very well supported by their teaching assistants, who provide high-quality individual help for all ability groups. The investment in new resources to help the pupils learn mathematical skills practically has also accelerated the progress that they are making.

- I explored why the most recently published attendance figures indicated that persistent absence was a problem at the school. Scrutiny of individual case studies clearly showed that this high rate of persistent absence was specific to the last academic year and was related to the health and welfare of some pupils who required regular medical attention. You keep a close eye on the attendance of all your pupils and are well supported in this by your family support officer, who helps you follow up any issues or concerns you may have. Your current attendance rates have been adversely affected by some unforeseen family circumstances. You have been relentless in following up these individual situations and have sought specialist help and advice which has ensured that the children involved are being kept safe and secure.
- Improvements recently made to the early years provision have had a strong impact on improving the progress that your youngest children make. Moving the Reception class to alternative accommodation, which has direct access to an outdoor area, has enhanced the learning experiences available. You and your teaching staff are fully aware that this outdoor area needs to be developed more so that it can provide the children with richer and more stimulating learning experiences.
- You are proud of the close links you enjoy with other schools in the local area. Staff and governors report that involvement with colleagues in other schools has enhanced their skills. By assessing and moderating pupils' work with colleagues in your local cluster, teachers have gained a clearer understanding of the demands of the new curriculum. You and your governors acknowledge that the strong relationships with the local school community could be developed even further to enhance the continuing success of East Harptree.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- ensure that the learning experiences of your Reception children are extended through richer and more stimulating opportunities in the outdoor learning area
- further improve teaching by continuing to develop the links you have established with local schools to access training and professional development opportunities.

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 Bath and North East Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, your deputy headteacher and a middle leader. We talked about the improvements which had been made since the previous inspection and I considered your self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I looked at all safeguarding records and explored your recruitment and vetting procedures. I also held discussions with three governors, including the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority. Together we visited mathematics lessons in all classes and looked at the work in pupils' books. I had a discussion with five Year 6 pupils. I looked at the 20 survey results from 'Parent View' and considered the comments that had been submitted.