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Mrs Tracey Dodd
Executive Deputy Headteacher Primary Lead
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Dear Mrs Dodd

Short inspection of Burrington Church of England Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 March 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 June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

You took on the direct responsibility for the leadership of the school in September 2013. Since then you have further integrated the school into the Chulmleigh Academy Trust and successfully used the network of other schools in the trust as a means of furthering school improvement. Your astute strategy for sharing the expertise of staff with a wide range of colleagues has ensured that teachers and teaching assistants at this small school have developed their skills well. Consequently, the curriculum has been revised at a pace and assessments of pupils are moderated effectively.

You have been resolute in maintaining the Christian ethos of the school. Values such as tolerance and respect are evident in assemblies and around the school in display work. These values shine through in the pupils. Pupils have good relationships with each other and with their teachers as a result. The family atmosphere at the school makes a good contribution to pupils' motivation. Pupils' progress is in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers ensure that a wide range of curriculum experiences are provided for pupils. For example, the current theme of mountains is used to promote art and craft activities effectively.

You and your team have successfully addressed the issues raised at the previous inspection. By updating the systems used for monitoring pupils' attendance you now have an effective process for following up on pupils' absence and, as a result, pupils' attendance has improved. Younger pupils' handwriting has continued to improve since the previous inspection. During the inspection I found many examples of well-presented written work with consistently well-formed letters.

The directors of the trust have a clear understanding of the educational challenges faced by a small school with falling pupil numbers. Nevertheless, they are ambitious for the pupils currently in the school and recognise that enabling more of them to make above-average progress in key stage 2 is an area to work on.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school's procedures for keeping pupils safe are fit for purpose. Staff have been trained in safeguarding and this training is regularly updated. They understand exactly what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. The leadership team has ensured that appropriate safeguarding records are kept. You have worked closely with the directors of the trust to ensure that all statutory duties are carried out.

Your curriculum helps pupils to understand the potential risks to their safety when using the internet and to appreciate the steps they need to take to avoid these risks. Pupils I spoke to during the inspection were adamant that they are well looked after and cared for at school; they all said they feel safe. They said that bullying is very rare and they expressed confidence that staff would deal with any isolated cases effectively. Inspection findings confirmed this.

Your staff know their pupils very well. However, they are not complacent and remain vigilant because you have fostered a culture where safeguarding is given a high priority.

Inspection findings

- Senior leaders carry out regular and detailed checks on the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils. Consequently, senior leaders have a clear insight into pupils' progress and understand their individual needs well. This understanding is used effectively to overcome any particular barriers to learning that pupils may have.
- One of the key lines of enquiry followed on this inspection centred on pupils' reading and writing in key stage 2. Pupils' progress in both reading and writing in key stage 2 is broadly the same as the progress of other pupils nationally. In 2016, most pupils reached the expected standard in reading and writing by the end of Year 6 but few went on to achieve at a higher level in either reading or writing. Pupils enjoy reading and are keen to talk about their favourite books and authors. They read well and with good expression. Pupils' written work is clear and well presented because of the care they invest in it. Teaching does not place enough emphasis on accurate spelling or punctuation when pupils are writing in subjects across the curriculum such as science, for example. As a result, pupils'

writing skills are not developed as swiftly as they could be in these other areas.

- Another key line of enquiry concerned leaders' success in developing the curriculum and introducing new assessment practices. Teachers meet with colleagues from the other schools in the trust at least once per week. They receive training and pass on their own knowledge through these meetings and so are kept up to date with the latest curriculum and assessment developments. For example, one member of staff has responsibility for mathematics teaching across the trust and so shares his expertise with all schools. Pupils benefit from this collaborative work. For example, one innovative teaching idea seen during the inspection involved pupils building motorised hand brushes while learning about electric circuits.
- Senior leaders have been successful in using the close links with other schools in the trust to moderate assessment judgements. Teachers comment that this is helping them assess pupils' attainment more reliably. Senior leaders are developing a new system for tracking pupils' progress in the school. It is too early to gauge the effect of this system because it is still in its infancy. However, this initiative illustrates the use that senior leaders are making of collaboration.
- A third key line of enquiry considered how well pupils' knowledge of phonics is used to develop their early reading skills. Teachers develop pupils' phonic skills well. In 2015 and 2016 all pupils reached the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 1. As pupils progress further up the school they continue to enjoy reading and use the skills they have acquired to confidently sound out unfamiliar words. Sometimes though, pupils do not transfer their early reading skills into their writing and so, for example, capital letters and full stops are not consistently tracked and used in sentence construction.
- Pupils behave well and work together well. They are keen to contribute their ideas in lessons and they are polite and well mannered when expressing them. Teachers have developed a culture where everyone feels included and this ensures that all pupils are motivated and involved. Pupils are proud of their school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils in key stage 2 are challenged to employ their writing skills fully in subjects other than English
- pupils' early reading skills are tracked continuously so that their phonic knowledge is built on further
- teachers continue to develop pupils' writing skills so that pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar are consistently correct.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of directors, the executive headteacher, the director of education for the diocese of Exeter, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Devon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the chair of the board of directors and the executive headteacher. I also met with senior leaders and teachers. I spoke with several pupils informally at playtime and held a meeting with pupils from Years 3 to 6. I scrutinised a variety of documents including those relating to safeguarding, minutes of governing body meetings, the school's assessment information and information relating to attendance. I undertook observations of learning in both classes, viewed work in pupils' books and spoke with pupils during lessons. I took into account responses from parents, pupils and staff to Ofsted's questionnaires.