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27 March 2017

Mrs Claire Cook  
Headteacher  
Newnham St Peter's Church of England Primary School  
Station Road  
Newnham  
Gloucestershire  
GL14 1AT

Dear Mrs Cook

### **Short inspection of Newnham St Peter's Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 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 January 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Through skilful delegation, and clear lines of responsibility, you lead and manage the school well. Your tight-knit team works very closely together but staff are never afraid to challenge each other to ensure that pupils receive the best possible education. They are always open to exploring new initiatives and seeking further specialist advice and professional development. You are exceptionally well supported by your very knowledgeable chair of governors and members of the governing body. The rigorous way in which they regularly check and monitor the school's effectiveness leaves 'no stones unturned'.

At the time of the previous inspection you were asked to ensure that the most able pupils in key stage 1 were consistently challenged in their writing. Since then, national test results, and the work in the current pupils' books, show that the most able writers achieve well. This is because they are given regular opportunities to write at length about interesting topics and subjects. You were also asked to make sure that pupils were clear about what they were learning and that they understood the feedback they were given about their work. When we visited classes together, it was evident that pupils know what they are learning and are clear about what they have to do to improve their work.

As recommended at the time of the previous inspection report, the school has updated its website and this fully meets requirements. Governors were asked to

provide more regular opportunities for parents and carers to meet with them to express their concerns and queries. Since then, governors have ensured that they make themselves available at parents' meetings and at different school events. They have worked with staff to improve the quality, regularity and tone of newsletters and have been proactive in the introduction of a school social media site. Parent surveys over the past three years show that the improvements to communication between home and school have been well received. Governors respond appropriately to parental complaints, closely adhering to local authority procedures. This ensures they are dealt with in a timely manner. Governor visits to school, regular newsletters and meetings with pupils also ensure that they are kept in touch with day-to-day life in school. Many parents are very happy with the school. As one parent explained, 'Both my children really enjoy school and are doing well. The teaching and support staff are extremely caring and work hard to make school a positive experience for them all.' Nevertheless, you are fully aware that a few parents still remain dissatisfied with aspects of the school. You and your governors try different ways to improve the communication between home and school and most are successful. Nevertheless, you know there is still a way to go to engage and work positively with the very small proportion of families who are unhappy with aspects of the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All staff and governors have completed the relevant training and apply all aspects of this to their everyday work in school. Recruiting and vetting procedures are thorough and systematically maintained. Staff know their pupils and their families very well and are quick to spot any potential safeguarding concerns. The school's close links with specialist agencies ensures that swift support can be given when required.

Pupils report that they feel very safe in school. This is endorsed by the majority of parents and summed up by one parent who explained that it is 'an incredibly caring school' where 'teachers go the extra mile for each and every child'. Pupils explain that when they have a worry or concern they are extremely confident that the pastoral support worker will always find time to discuss and help them sort out their problems. Pupils are adamant that there is no persistent bullying or anti-social behaviour in school. They explain that occasionally there are minor disputes with their friends but these are always quickly resolved. Pupils demonstrate a strong knowledge of keeping themselves free from harm when using the internet and are fully aware of the dangers of using social media sites. A very small minority of parents who completed Parent View, the online inspection questionnaire, felt that their children did not feel safe in school and were not well looked after. Leaders know that they need to communicate more closely with these families to resolve their concerns.

## Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to check what the school was doing to ensure that the current Year 6 pupils were making the progress they were capable of and reaching the expected standards for their age. We both acknowledged that published information for small schools can be misleading. However you, your staff and governors recognise that not all of the Year 6 pupils in the 2016 cohort were as fully prepared as they could have been for the rigours of the new curriculum and the challenging end-of-year tests. To rectify this, your subject leaders have changed the way that they teach the basic skills of reading, writing and number. They are also helping the pupils to stay calm and develop more stamina when faced with test conditions.
- By sharing a book together as a class and basing their topic work around it, pupils in Years 3 to 6 are developing a wider vocabulary and a better understanding of what they are reading. Year 6 pupils report that the class focus on a particular book has given them greater confidence in reading more widely, and this has made the curriculum more exciting and engaging. It is also helping them to improve their writing skills. This is because the pupils have a greater thirst for writing at length about the topics they are learning. They enjoy sharing their written work with each other and willingly accept advice from their classmates on how they can improve their writing skills. Publishing their work on an internet site that shares high-quality work has raised the pupils' aspirations.
- You acknowledge that, in the past, pupils have not always spelled accurately and teaching staff know that this contributed to the disappointing 2016 test results in Year 6. To rectify this you have introduced a more precise way of teaching spellings which helps pupils to recognise word patterns. This is having a positive impact on the accuracy of their spelling when they are completing writing tasks. Greater attention is also being given to ensuring that pupils use the correct punctuation and accurate grammar. However, you agree that not all pupils present their work in a neat and legible style.
- Teachers and pupils explained to me about the new approach you are using to develop pupils' mathematical skills. Through being encouraged to 'do it, twist it and solve it', pupils are gaining a better understanding of new concepts. This approach requires pupils to explain how they have solved a problem. They are then required to adapt their learning to solve another mathematical problem. Your teachers are making greater use of practical mathematical resources to help those pupils, especially your middle-attaining groups, whose understanding of mathematical concepts is less secure.
- My next line of enquiry was to explore how the school was supporting the very small number of pupils who did not meet the expected reading standard in the 2016 Year 2 tests. The effective additional support provided by your well-trained teaching assistants has given these pupils greater confidence in their ability to read for meaning. Pupils read with fluency and talk enthusiastically about the characters in the books or discuss the information given in factual books. The impressive progress they have made is reflected in recent assessments and in detailed individual progress monitoring records.

- My final line of enquiry was to find out what you were doing to tackle the poor and persistent absence of those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. During the academic year 2015/16, there was an unusually high level of poor health and adverse personal circumstances. This had a negative impact on your attendance rates. Consequently, you keep a close eye on those pupils who do not attend school regularly or have a pattern of lateness. These families are very well supported by your pastoral support worker, who liaises closely with the families. As a result, the attendance of those pupils who found difficulty coming to school regularly has significantly improved.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the small minority of parents who still remain dissatisfied with aspects of the school are encouraged to become more engaged in school life and are helped to communicate their concerns through appropriate routes
- support and encouragement are given to those pupils who find it difficult to present their work in a neat and legible style.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the diocese of Gloucester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Gloucestershire. 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 senior teacher and the chair of governors and we talked about the improvements that have been made since the last inspection. I also considered your self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I looked at all safeguarding records and explored your recruitment and vetting procedures. I held a discussion with your middle leaders. I also met with four other members of the governing body. Together we visited all the classes and looked at a sample of books from each year group. I heard three Year 3 pupils read and had a discussion with six Year 6 pupils. I considered 37 pupil responses to the online questionnaire. I met with groups of parents in the playground before school started, and considered the 44 responses submitted by parents through Parent View. I also considered 15 responses from the online staff questionnaire.