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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Katie Gray
Executive Headteacher
Broadhembury Church of England Primary School
Broadhembury
Honiton
Devon
EX14 3NF

Dear Mrs Gray

Short inspection of Broadhembury Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 September 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

You are providing strong leadership to a school which has undergone significant changes in recent times. Most notably, you have ensured that recent substantial staff turnover has not affected the good quality of education provided by the school. Broadhembury Church of England Primary School joined the Jubilee Federation in September 2012, linking up with Branscombe Church of England Primary School. Farway Church of England Primary School joined the federation in 2014. You are the executive headteacher across all three schools and have successfully drawn on the resources and opportunities provided by the federation to help improve the education at Broadhembury further. In this drive, you are ably supported by the federation's governing body. Governors have a very good understanding of their role of strategic oversight and know what the school's strengths are and what it still needs to work on.

You have acted successfully to address the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. For example, pupils now have greater access to extra-curricular activities, some of which develop their links with the local community. In conversation, pupils commented on how much they like these activities. You do not rest on your laurels, however, and have clear priorities for future improvement, including developing pupils' writing abilities across the curriculum.

Pupils say they are happy at Broadhembury and enjoy their time at the school. All the parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed with this. One comment was typical of many, describing Broadhembury as 'a happy environment where the whole school works and plays together'. The large majority of parents would recommend it to another prospective parent.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have developed a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. You act as the designated safeguarding lead across the federation and have put in place systems to ensure that safeguarding at Broadhembury is secure. This allows you to act quickly on any concerns notified to you by staff. You work well with outside agencies and are persistent in securing an appropriate response to your concerns. The culture of safeguarding is developed through regular training for staff, augmented by frequent updates about current issues in safeguarding or changes in government advice. The single central record of pre-employment checks on teachers and other staff meets requirements. Overall, therefore, you have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry during this inspection concerned the progress made by disadvantaged pupils across the school. Broadhembury has a significant proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged, over one third. Extensive scrutiny of their work shows that disadvantaged pupils in all year groups are making good progress from their different starting points. In particular, the most able disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress, not only in core subjects such as English and mathematics but also in topic work in history and geography, for example.
- Staff have a good understanding of the needs of disadvantaged pupils and any specific barriers they face to making better progress. Additional help is precisely targeted to their particular requirements. You and the governors have ensured that the additional funding provided by the pupil premium is used effectively.
- The inspection's second line of enquiry looked at how effectively school leaders are ensuring that pupils make good progress in mathematics. The school is small and the cohorts who took the national curriculum assessments in 2016 in both key stage 1 and key stage 2 were very small indeed. Their results, therefore, need to be treated with caution. Nonetheless, there were some indications that progress in mathematics for these pupils was slower than in reading and writing. Samples of work from the early years to Year 6, however, show that current pupils are making good progress in their mathematics.

- The most able mathematicians make particularly good progress in all year groups. In the early years, they quickly develop their understanding of number and of shape, space and measure. They can, for example, understand number bonds and carry out calculations. The older most able pupils quickly acquire the fundamentals of mathematics and by the time they reach Years 5 and 6 they can demonstrate a strong ability to solve problems and to reason about mathematics.
- Pupils set out their mathematics work well. This logical presentation helps them to think clearly when problem solving and also to identify quickly where any errors have been made and to correct them.
- The third line of enquiry during the inspection related to the development of pupils' writing. In our initial discussion, you identified this as an area that the school has been working on. Together we looked at a range of pupils' writing, both in their English work and in other subjects, such as the various themes they study. Broadly speaking, pupils are making good progress from their individual starting points. In the early years, children make quick progress in their writing skills. Pupils in the rest of the school are developing the security and confidence in grammar and punctuation that allow them to express their ideas clearly. They can write in an appropriate manner for a variety of purposes, whether in a story, a poem, a letter or a newspaper article. The ability to sustain sophisticated and more complex writing, however, was less evident, both in their English and their topic work. You are rightly addressing this as a priority for further development.
- My final line of enquiry focused on attendance. In 2016, the rates of attendance overall and for specific key groups of pupils were too low. You and other staff have worked successfully to tackle this and absence has reduced as a result. For the year to date, overall attendance is higher than the national average. Moreover, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the teaching of writing challenges pupils to produce work of greater depth and sophistication, both in English and across the curriculum.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, 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

Stephen Lee
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you at the start of the day and we agreed the key lines of enquiry that the inspection would follow. We visited both classes in the school together, where I was able to observe pupils' learning, talk to them about it and look at their work. Together, we scrutinised the work of pupils from every year group. I held telephone conversations with the chair of the federation's governing body, another governor and a representative of the local authority. I met with a group of pupils to discuss their experiences of the school and took into account 10 responses from parents to Parent View. I examined a range of the school's documentation, including key policies, attendance records and safeguarding information.