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Mrs Alison Waite  
Headteacher  
Burrington Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School  
Burrington  
Bristol  
Somerset  
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Dear Mrs Waite

### **Short inspection of Burrington Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 18 May 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 March 2014.

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

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

Your effective leadership has ensured that pupils thrive within the school and village community. The Christian ethos pervades all that you and the pupils do. There is a caring and aspirational climate that is helping staff and pupils work together effectively. Activities are interesting, memorable and challenging. The school curriculum plans have clear, meaningful links which support pupils' progress effectively. As one parent commented, 'Burrington Primary is an excellent school for my children; it has a strong, caring, nurturing ethos which has enabled them to thrive and grow with confidence.'

Since the last inspection, you and the governors have led the school through a range of initiatives which have added value to the pupils' experiences in the curriculum. You have introduced Nursery provision which supports children in being ready for the Reception Year so that progress can be sharper and speedier in the attainment of early learning goals. This provides a solid foundation when children move through the school. You have introduced outdoor activities that challenge pupils through new experiences such as the Mendip outdoor pursuits. Within school, pupils are challenged more, for instance with competitions in mathematics. Both you and the governors have

increased the level of monitoring and teachers are responding well to the new levels of accountability and rigour in the system.

You have appointed a new leader of mathematics who has been pivotal in making improvements. There has been substantial investment in time for professional development of teachers. As a result, teachers are more secure in supporting pupils to reason mathematically and solve complex problems in key stages 1 and 2. This is one of the ways that pupils can gain higher grades. Curriculum plans continue to focus on further progress in this subject.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and the governors have ensured that there is a culture of safeguarding and that records are of high quality. You and the staff are vigilant in keeping pupils safe. This is important because the site is extensive and pupils walk beyond the school perimeter to the outside play area. Staff are trained well on how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, and from the influence of radical or extreme views. You work sensitively with parents and external agencies to monitor and support the more vulnerable pupils.

### **Inspection findings**

- We investigated the improvements in mathematics since the last inspection because progress in this subject is still not as strong as in English. The leader of mathematics has identified that mental mathematics, number bonds and recognition of patterns in numbers are the areas on which to focus. Staff have evaluated their own subject knowledge so the leader has been able to provide individual support to teachers when necessary. Consequently, staff confidence has improved and learning is more secure. A range of resources that highlight number bonds and patterns are being used by pupils who need them and this is improving their awareness. Pupils' mental mathematical skills are tested more frequently and pupils commented on the success of this. Previous work on reasoning and problem solving is embedded well. There is scope to improve the outcomes so that more pupils gain the higher level.
- The mathematical investigation dovetailed with the question of whether enough of the most able pupils are succeeding at the higher levels in reading and mathematics and writing at greater depth. School leaders have identified that the most able pupils are not adept at showing their skills under test conditions so more has been done to prepare them. Analysis of recent assessment shows that outcomes are better as a result. Comprehension exercises, similar to those taken in the end of year tests at key stage 2, are completed more frequently and pupils' awareness of questioning and text type is more assured. Staff are focusing more carefully on the level of challenge set in the core and wider curriculum and making sure it is stretching pupils effectively. The increased expectations in reading have been replicated in writing tasks. Any gaps in grammatical knowledge and spelling inaccuracies are identified. A highly trained teaching assistant

works with pupils to rectify these areas and improvements are happening more rapidly. However, some of the most able pupils are not presenting flawless work when writing extended pieces in the wider curriculum and careless errors are not being picked up by teachers.

- We discussed the dip in attendance and increase in the persistent absence of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Your vigilance in making sure pupils attend is strong and respected by staff and the parental community. As a consequence, the attendance of pupils, regardless of their groupings, is now better than the national average and persistent absence has decreased to below national average.
- Finally, we investigated the progress of children in the early years foundation stage because there had been a decline in standards for children achieving a good level of development in 2016. Children are given purposeful activities to do which encourage a high level of interaction and communication. They cope with these well. Now, children in the Nursery Year mingle with children in Reception for much of the time and this is speeding their development. However, the most able are not challenged adequately, in particular with writing development and sentence structure.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching improves so that:
  - the level of challenge continues and extends into all phases so pupils deepen their thinking and learning in the core and wider curriculum
  - pupils embed their literacy skills when writing extended pieces in other subjects
  - the most able pupils achieve their full potential and gain results at a high standard in mathematics and reading and at greater depth in writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, leader for mathematics, governors, staff and pupils. I had a telephone call with the school improvement adviser. I visited lessons for all classes in the school. I looked at the quality of work in pupils' exercise books. I considered documentary evidence relating to the impact of the school's work, including safeguarding. I took into account 16 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and 15 comments written by parents plus the 10 responses from staff and the 14 pupil responses to the Ofsted online survey.