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Mrs Rosanna Roberts  
Headteacher  
Nether Stowey Church of England Primary School  
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Nether Stowey  
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Dear Mrs Roberts

### **Short inspection of Nether Stowey Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 27 June 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 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 have led your staff team with rigour. Governors have supported a new leadership structure which in turn has strengthened leadership capacity. As a result, leaders at all levels have ensured that any relative dips in the school's overall performance have been tackled quickly. As a result, teaching is good overall.

You have a clear vision for the school. This is shared by your deputy headteacher and other leaders. Together you work on the right aspects for improvement. For example, most recently, leaders have been effective in improving the teaching of mathematics. As a result, pupils can use and apply their mathematical understanding well and solve problems with greater confidence. Consequently, pupils' progress in mathematics is good.

At the previous inspection you were asked to improve teachers' questioning to develop pupils' thinking. This is now particularly effective in mathematics and in the early years. You were also asked to plan more opportunities to develop writing and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. You quickly implemented the changes set out in the national curriculum 2014. Activities are planned across a broad range of subjects. However, your work to apply English skills across the curriculum is only partially effective because not all teachers insist that pupils write with the same complexity and high quality in their topic work as

they do in English lessons.

The views of parents are generally positive. Nearly 90% of the parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, stated that they would recommend the school to others. However, you, along with governors, acknowledge that there is more to do to secure parental satisfaction. A very small minority of parents raised concerns about pupils' behaviour and the progress their children make.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed, up to date and carefully maintained. The training that staff and governors receive means that they are well equipped to notice and report concerns. Inspection evidence confirms that staff apply their training to their daily work, report concerns and follow up on the action that designated safeguarding leaders have taken. Designated leaders for safeguarding work closely with external agencies in a timely way to ensure that pupils' risk of harm is minimised. Leaders do not waver in their decisions to take concerns further when needed. Systems in place to manage pupils who demonstrate challenging behaviour are fit for purpose and staff training is up to date.

Governors are vigilant in their assessment of site safety; for example, recent upgrading to the external boundary of the early years outdoor area provides a safe and secure area to learn.

Pupils said they feel safe in school. They said that when issues do arise, adults help them sort them out quickly. They know how to keep safe online and are aware of the potential risks of online bullying.

### **Inspection findings**

- A key line of enquiry to ascertain that the school remained good was to establish the effectiveness of the teaching of mathematics in bringing about consistently good pupil outcomes. These were above the national average in 2016. However, the proportion of pupils who exceeded the standards expected for their age was considerably lower.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. You have provided staff with a comprehensive menu of staff training and support and used external support through mathematics network meetings well to upgrade teachers' knowledge and skills in the teaching of mathematics.
- There are regular opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills. Pupils are encouraged to think hard and deepen their understanding. They solve problems and reason well. Pupils say that their mathematics lessons are more challenging now than previously. As a result, a greater proportion of pupils is working at the higher standard in mathematics.
- My second line of enquiry was to examine the impact of leaders' actions to

improve pupils' attendance, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

- Whole-school attendance has improved this year and is in line with the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- The attendance of the most vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is checked rigorously. However, a few of these pupils do not attend well enough. Governors recognise that there is more to do in this aspect.
- Another area I looked at was the effectiveness of leaders' actions to ensure that all groups of pupils are making consistently good progress in their writing. This is because a smaller-than-average proportion of low-attaining boys met the standards expected for their age in writing at the end of Year 2. In addition, no pupils exceeded these standards at the end of key stage 1. I also looked at how effectively the most able pupils are challenged across the school.
- Overall, the teaching of writing across the school is good. Most pupils make good progress and can apply their writing skills well. However, the writing seen in other subject areas shows that teachers do not consistently expect pupils to apply the full range of skills they are taught in English lessons.
- The teaching of phonics is good. As a result, outcomes have improved consistently over a number of years. Most pupils apply their knowledge and understanding of phonics to their writing. As a result, spelling is increasingly accurate.
- Pupils who were previously low-attaining in Year 3 receive precise teaching that is closely matched to their needs. Consequently, these pupils write with better stamina and precision. They use ambitious word choices to add detail and spell with increasing accuracy. As a result, these pupils are catching up quickly towards the standards that are expected for their age.
- Staff training and regular moderation of writing outcomes has improved teachers' subject knowledge about the skills pupils need to write at the highest standards. However, there is room to improve the most able pupils' writing even further. In a few classes, the most able pupils do not receive challenging work quickly enough. In such cases, pupils' concentration falters and their learning slows. Leaders' checks on pupils' progress do not take into account pupils' prior attainment. Hence, the variability of the progress of a few middle-attaining pupils and the most able pupils is not readily identified or acted on as swiftly as it could be.
- Children in Reception make strong progress in their writing development. Most children can write in sentences and many can expand their ideas well. The most able children make good and often rapid progress in writing.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders' checks on teaching and learning take full account of pupils' prior attainment so that any gaps in learning are identified and acted upon quickly
- a greater proportion of middle-attaining pupils and the most able pupils make rapid progress in their writing, especially in subjects other than English, so that they exceed the standards that are expected for their age
- any parental concerns are resolved quickly and regular checks on parental satisfaction are pursued.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Carrington  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I spoke with you, senior and middle leaders, and the vice-chair of governors. I also held telephone conversations with the chair of governors and a representative of the local authority. I made visits to lessons to observe pupils' attitudes to learning and to scrutinise their work. I looked at pupils' workbooks with a variety of leaders. I talked with a group of pupils to gather their views of the school.

I considered a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's self-evaluation, development plans, school performance information, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding documentation.

In addition, I took account of 48 responses to the Parent View online survey, free-text messaging service and feedback to Ofsted. I gathered the views of staff throughout the online questionnaire and through discussions during the inspection.