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Mrs Marie Ward
Headteacher
Townlands Church of England Primary School
Meadow Court Road
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Dear Mrs Ward

Short inspection of Townlands Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 October 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in April 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education since the last inspection. You have ensured that the proportion of pupils who achieve the standards expected of them continues to be greater than that nationally.

You have correctly identified the most important areas for improvement and have successfully addressed many of them. However, plans could be sharper so that governors can measure how successful leaders have been in bringing improvements. Staff receive a wide range of training and support to improve outcomes for pupils.

Leaders test out new approaches to learning, such as the recently introduced reading journals, before implementing them across the school. This means that when they are rolled out to the whole school, there are a small number of staff who can provide support to others.

Leaders have ensured that children in the early years have varied and exciting experiences outside. The recently developed outdoor area is attractive and is used well to promote learning. Staff are successful in developing children's early communication and language skills.

Pupils' behaviour and conduct are exemplary. They are articulate and develop the confidence to justify their opinions. They are very positive about the school and describe how well pupils get on and how everyone feels involved. They appreciate the many extra-

curricular activities that are available to them. They know how to keep themselves safe both in school and online. They say that incidents of bullying are extremely rare, and this is reflected in the records that the school keeps. When incidents do occur, they are dealt with quickly and effectively by school leaders.

In classes, pupils listen well to their teachers and concentrate on their work. Disruption is extremely rare, enabling pupils to progress well in lessons.

I spoke to several parents who were very positive about the school. One parent told me that pupils 'do well at the school', describing it as 'brilliant – my children have come on in leaps and bounds.' Another parent spoke highly of the support that their family had received from the school.

Leaders keep a very close eye on attendance. The procedures they have put in place have resulted in the absence of disadvantaged pupils being reduced significantly, although there is still further work to do in this area.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Leaders work hard to ensure that pupils get the support they need. This includes working with a wide range of external agencies and providing daily opportunities for pupils to talk about any concerns that they may have. Leaders are very thorough in their approach to identify levels of risk. This means that the most vulnerable pupils are kept safe.

Governors understand their responsibilities and routinely check that the school is correctly applying the safeguarding policy.

Pupils and parents say that pupils are kept safe in school and that they know who to go to if they have any concerns.

Inspection findings

- You have correctly identified the need to increase rates of progress in reading and have changed the way reading is taught. You are now developing pupils' reading skills more effectively. Pupils talk about what they have read with enthusiasm. They are able to answer increasingly complex questions that reveal a deeper understanding of what they are reading. However, while leaders effectively evaluate the standards that groups of pupils reach, they do not regularly evaluate the proportion of pupils who progress well and those who make even better progress.
- Leaders have taken positive steps to develop pupils' love of reading. These include close links with the local library, providing a greater range of stimulating resources, and daily access to the school library. Pupils enjoy the school's themed days, such as 'Dahlicious Day', which celebrated the work of author Roald Dahl.

- Your plan for using the pupil premium is well designed and provides appropriate support for disadvantaged pupils to make increased progress. Learning support assistants provide regular intervention and feedback to pupils. Those adults trained in supporting pupils to develop their emotional literacy skills successfully increased resilience in their learning. However, targets for improvement set out in the plan are not measurable. Therefore, an effective evaluation of the plan cannot be undertaken. This means that governors are unable to hold leaders to account for the impact of this spending.
- You have put in place a procedure for identifying pupils who have high levels of absence. This has resulted in a significant reduction in the absence of disadvantaged pupils, although you acknowledge that this remains an area for improvement. You have also recognised that the school's holiday pattern resulted in increased absence due to it not matching that of other local schools. This has been changed, and the school's term times will shortly be in line with other local schools.
- You work with a range of external agencies to improve attendance. This has, on occasion, resulted in the use of fixed-penalty notices, which have secured improved attendance.
- Along with governors, you routinely ensure that you meet your requirements for publishing information. Prior to my visit, you had experienced technical difficulties with the school's website. This resulted in some documentation being lost and some information not being easily accessible, so your website did not comply with statutory requirements. However, this has now been rectified and you will continue to routinely undertake checks with governors and external providers.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- set out more specific targets and evaluation methods in the improvement plan, so that governors can hold leaders to account for its success
- routinely monitor the progress of all groups of learners, especially that of disadvantaged pupils
- improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils so that it matches that of other pupils nationally.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Leicester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Vic Wilkinson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and we shared the school's self-evaluation and agreed my key lines of enquiry. We also met to talk about absence, safeguarding and the pupil premium strategy. I had discussions with pupils, hearing them read, and parents at the start of the school day. I considered the responses of parents made to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the views of staff and pupils. We visited all classes in the school together, spending a short time in each. We looked at a sample of pupils' work together. I viewed a range of documents, including the school's improvement plan, the single central record, governor documentation and behaviour logs.