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Mr Andrew Wishart  
Headteacher  
Freshford Church of England Primary School  
High Street  
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Somerset  
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Dear Mr Wishart

### **Short inspection of Freshford Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 November 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 July 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Your vision for the school is ambitious and effective. You lead by example and your work is highly valued by staff, governors and parents. You demonstrate commitment and resolve and hold high expectations for teaching and outcomes for pupils. You respond quickly and effectively when issues arise and, together with the leadership team, bring about sustained improvements when required. As a result, pupils achieve well.

Governors have a precise knowledge and understanding of what the school does well and what could be even better. The chair of the governing body visits frequently to gather first-hand information about leaders' work and to support them as a critical friend. The governing body offers appropriate challenge and support to leaders.

All staff who responded to the survey said that they enjoy working at this school. They unanimously agree that you do all that you can to ensure that the school has a motivated, respected and effective teaching staff. Pupils behave well. They make strong progress because of their highly positive attitudes to learning.

You and your team have successfully maintained the strengths noted in the previous inspection report. The results of the national curriculum assessments in reading and mathematics in 2017 showed that all pupils made exceptionally strong

progress. Consequently, pupils' achievement in these subjects was deemed to be in the top 10% of schools nationally.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have established a strong culture of keeping pupils safe. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff understand and implement school safeguarding policies and procedures effectively. They have the appropriate knowledge and expertise to recognise the potential signs of abuse quickly. You work effectively with other agencies and are persistent in securing the appropriate responses to your concerns. Safer recruitment procedures meet requirements.

You know the needs of vulnerable pupils and their families. There are clear systems in place to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. My discussions with pupils revealed that they feel safe and have a trusted adult they can go to with a worry or a concern. All parents who responded to the parent survey agree that their child is happy, feels safe and is well looked after. A typical comment written by a parent was, 'Staff really care about the children and every aspect of their development.'

Part of our discussions around safeguarding focused on pupils' attendance. The school's own attendance information for the academic year 2016 to 2017 shows that overall absence rates have risen. You have put in place a range of measures to check and improve pupils' attendance. You ensure that poor attendance is not allowed to go unchallenged. These actions are proving to be successful because attendance is improving for individuals and groups.

### **Inspection findings**

- My first line of enquiry focused on evaluating leaders' actions in improving pupils' phonic knowledge in key stage 1. This is because the school's most recent results show that pupils' achievement in phonics was below the national average. You have taken decisive action by implementing a new approach to phonics teaching. This is ensuring consistency of approach across the different classes. As a result, pupils' performance in phonics is improving. Teachers use a range of strategies to meet the specific needs of individuals and groups. Their timely intervention and support enables pupils' learning to progress well in phonics lessons.
- Pupils use their phonic knowledge successfully in reading. They are usually self-assured and determined to persevere with unfamiliar words. However, some gaps in phonic knowledge are holding back some pupils. Leaders recognise the need to embed the school's approaches to teaching phonics further, particularly for the lower-attaining pupils.
- Next, I focused on evaluating actions taken to ensure that key stage 2 pupils, particularly the most able, make substantial progress in writing. Pupils' progress in writing in the 2017 national curriculum assessments was not as strong as their progress in reading and mathematics. Consequently, teachers are using a range of strategies to further accelerate pupils' achievement in writing. As a result, pupils master skills quickly and use these effectively to develop their ideas. Pupils

maintain high standards in writing across the curriculum.

- Pupils' books, including those of the most able, show that writing is progressing well. Pupils successfully acquire a range of age-related skills. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are using a variety of complex devices and techniques to engage the reader. The most able pupils are adept at selecting precise and well-chosen vocabulary to heighten interest in their work. They demonstrate highly developed skills in sentence punctuation and grammar. This adds depth to their writing.
- Leaders' actions have been successful in addressing the areas for improvement in writing, as detailed in the previous inspection report.
- I also focused on evaluating how leaders' actions are providing pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum. You ensure that pupils have access to a comprehensive and creative curriculum which provides them with a wide range of exciting learning opportunities. The subjects taught ensure that pupils acquire the appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills in all aspects of their education. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their learning. They say that they feel well prepared when moving on to the next stage of their education.
- Pupils' work shows that the curriculum is effectively supporting their strong progress. For example, pupils' science books show that they are gaining a secure understanding of the scientific topics covered. However, you acknowledge that the most able pupils need more opportunities to work at greater depth. This should develop their skills in scientific enquiry and investigation further.
- My final line of enquiry evaluated how well leaders and governors are demonstrating the capacity to drive improvement. Leaders have a precise understanding of the school's current performance. Their views on the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils are accurate and well founded.
- School documents show that leaders give staff clear guidance and targets on how to improve their practice. These are followed up in subsequent observations of teaching. However, monitoring procedures are not yet fully focused on evaluating the impact of teaching on all groups of pupils.
- Governors hold school leaders to account for pupils' achievement. They use their understanding of school performance data and their own monitoring to challenge leaders on the impact their actions are having. Leaders and governors demonstrate strong capacity to drive further school improvement.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's approaches to phonics teaching are further embedded to secure strong progress, particularly for the lower-attaining pupils
- the most able pupils have opportunities to work at greater depth in science
- monitoring of teaching quality pays careful attention to the impact teaching has on the progress of all groups of pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Neil Swait  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I spoke with you, staff members, three representatives of the governing body and pupils from across the school. I made visits to lessons to observe pupils' learning and to scrutinise their work. I also listened to individual pupils read in Years 1 and 2.

I considered a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's development plans, attendance and monitoring records and safeguarding documents.

In addition, I took account of 64 responses to the Parent View online survey; 54 responses to the pupil survey; and 12 responses to the staff survey.