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Mrs Ann Barry  
Headteacher  
Temple Guiting Church of England School  
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Dear Mrs Barry

### **Short inspection of Temple Guiting Church of England School**

Following my visit to the school on 16 January 2018, 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 October 2013.

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

Leaders and governors have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since your appointment in September 2017, you have quickly established yourself as an effective and well-respected headteacher. You lead the school with calm authority and yet you tackle issues head on when necessary. Morale among staff is high because they are held to account for their performance, but, equally, they feel respected and valued for the hard work they do.

You have begun to modernise systems in the school, for example bringing more rigour to the process for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching. As a result, staff have higher expectations of themselves and of pupils. You have inspired an outward-looking attitude among staff, and this is encouraging them to be more involved in links with other schools and organisations. Teachers are bringing new ideas and resources into the school and so the quality of teaching is improving.

Pupils work well together in mixed-age classes. They eat together and play together readily as a result of the good relationships they have with each other and with staff. You have maintained good links with the local church and you have ensured that pupils' spiritual and moral development remains strong. Pupils appreciate the extra-curricular activities staff provide, for example the school choir. The proportion of children attaining a good level of development in the early years has risen each year for the last three years and is now above average. Pupils' attainment in key stage 1 was well above the national average in 2017. In key stage 2, a high

proportion of pupils attain the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined.

The school has successfully addressed the issues raised at the previous inspection. Teaching is challenging the most able pupils. For example, during the inspection, pupils were asked to think of incisive questions to pose during imaginary interviews with characters from the book, 'War Horse'. This activity caused pupils to think deeply and with empathy with the characters. Teaching in the Reception Year is ensuring that children are given purposeful activities to engage in. However, the outdoor space is still uninviting for children in the Reception Year. You have plans in place to refurbish this area in the near future.

Pupils' development of early reading skills has not been as fast as that of other pupils nationally in recent years. You have taken action recently to improve the quality of teaching of phonics and reverse this trend. There are some early signs of success. Key stage 2 pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling improved last year, having been below average in the previous year. However, pupils' accuracy in spelling remained the weakest element of their English skills. By introducing a more systematic approach to English teaching, you have ensured that pupils' skills are now improving. Year 6 pupils' progress in mathematics in 2017 was around the national average. Although pupils enjoy mathematics and have achieved well over a number of years, you are ambitious to see further improvements in this subject.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your staff demonstrate a strong commitment to pupils' safety and welfare. You ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Regular training and updates ensure that all staff are informed about the latest guidance. Governors are very aware of their role in ensuring that the school is meeting its legal requirements. Thorough checks are made on the suitability of staff, governors and volunteers before they are appointed.

The school's records show that incidents of poor behaviour are extremely rare. Pupils reported that the excellent behaviour seen during the inspection is typical. Pupils feel safe. They know that if they have concerns they can talk to any member of staff. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe online. Parents spoke highly of the support and guidance that you and your staff provide for pupils. Parents are confident that their children are kept safe at school.

### **Inspection findings**

- You have developed an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school in a short period of time. Consequently, your plans to improve the school are precise and coherent. You have prioritised the necessary actions well, focusing sharply on changes in a few particular areas. For example, you have ensured that assessment of pupils' attainment and tracking of their progress are accurate and timely.
- The chair of the governing body has considerable expertise. She leads the

governing body skilfully. Her leadership has enabled the governing body to steer the school through a difficult period in recent years. Following the departure of the previous long-standing headteacher in July 2016, a new headteacher was appointed but had to leave, because of ill health, in December 2016. Governors acted decisively to secure effective interim leadership for the remainder of the academic year until your arrival. Their action ensured that the good quality of education was maintained throughout this period of turbulence.

- To decide whether the school remains good, one of the key lines of enquiry focused on key stage 2 pupils' English skills. In 2016, pupils' attainment in English grammar, punctuation and spelling was below average. Pupils' average score in the spelling assessment was also below that of other pupils nationally. In 2017, key stage 2 pupils' attainment improved significantly and was above average. The school has improved the effectiveness of teaching in key stage 2 by taking a more systematic approach to teaching specific literacy skills. As a result, pupils' attainment rose in last year's key stage 2 assessments. Pupils' spelling, however, did not improve as much. You introduced a new spelling strategy in September 2017, and this is beginning to hit home. School assessments show that key stage 2 attainment in spelling is rising for most pupils, but some pupils still lack confidence in their ability to spell accurately.
- Another key line of enquiry concentrated on key stage 2 pupils' achievements in mathematics. Pupils' progress in mathematics was above average in 2016 and around average in 2017. Pupils currently in the school enjoy mathematics and look forward to their lessons. Middle leaders accept that, although pupils show fluency in using numbers and carrying out calculations, pupils' skills in reasoning and problem solving are not as strong. Teaching of these skills has not been developed quickly enough in the past. You have ensured that links with other schools are now being used fully to develop teaching in this area. For example, pupils are given regular exercises in reasoning. While most pupils are rising to these challenges, some still have difficulty in explaining their thinking clearly, because they lack the necessary vocabulary. Improvements to the moderation of teachers' assessments of pupils' mathematical skills are helping to give middle leaders a more accurate view of pupils' achievements. This is helping to improve the quality of mathematics teaching further.
- A third key line of enquiry considered phonics teaching in Reception and Year 1. Over the last three years, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been in decline. Last year, it fell below the national average. You recognised this when you arrived and took action immediately to improve the school's system of assessing pupils' phonic knowledge. Teachers now have a much better understanding of pupils' progress in phonics and so they are able to plan learning that is more appropriate to pupils' abilities. The school's information indicates that more pupils are now on track to attain the expected standard in the phonics screening check. However, some Year 1 pupils still do not recognise the link between key letters and the sounds they represent. During the week before the inspection, you launched a new programme for teaching phonics. Your preparations for this launch have been thorough. Staff received good-quality training and are confident that the new programme will succeed. This illustrates your emphasis on developing the

skills of your staff. It is too early to judge the impact of this new programme.

- You and your staff are well respected by pupils and parents. Parents recognise that the school provides a good, well-rounded education with rich experiences that go beyond academic success. One parent's comment was typical of many: 'The staff and leadership team model teamwork and a family Christian ethos that helps children of all ages to care for and work with one another.'

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the mathematical vocabulary of pupils throughout the school is developed
- key stage 2 pupils check their own written work more thoroughly to make sure that their spelling is accurate
- the effectiveness of the new phonics teaching programme in the Reception Year and key stage 1 is evaluated fully.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Williams  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, middle leaders, the chair of the governing body and three other governors. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I held a meeting with pupils from the school council and spoke with many other pupils informally at break and lunchtime. I made observations of learning across the school jointly with you. I looked at several examples of pupils' work and spoke with pupils during lessons. I scrutinised a variety of documents, including the school's own evaluation of its performance, assessment information and records of checks that leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children. I spoke with parents before school and at the end of the school day and considered 16 responses from parents to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View.