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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mrs Vicky O'Brien  
Headteacher  
Worlingham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School  
Garden Lane  
Worlingham  
Beccles  
Suffolk  
NR34 7SB

Dear Mrs O'Brien

### **Short inspection of Worlingham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 11 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 June 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You and your staff inspire the children and pupils to value their education highly and to become independent and curious learners. Pupils describe the school community as 'one big family'. They enthuse about their lessons and teachers who capture their imagination, motivating and challenging them to aim high and to achieve the very best in their personal and academic development.

Your carefully chosen curriculum topics and themes support pupils to become aware of their community and the environment. For example, pupils have contributed to the current 'wonderwall' and theme of the term, 'Plants are amazing, that's life', by growing their own plants. In Reception, children grow and cook their own vegetables, developing their understanding of the world around them.

Since the previous inspection, you, the governors, and your leadership team have ensured that high-quality teaching, centred on excellent subject knowledge, an enriched curriculum and 'learning hooks' spark children's and pupils' curiosity and

make sure that they make at least good progress from their different starting points.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to the work of the school. Staff teach pupils to have a strong sense of morality, to be kind, helpful and to think of others. Pupils are exceptionally proud of their 'friendship wall' and explain how they welcome new pupils to the school, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to make new friends. New pupils I spoke with said how easy it was to make friends, how welcomed they felt and how much they enjoy learning.

It is a credit to your work that, since the previous inspection, teachers' expectations have risen and are of an exceptionally high standard. Pupils' behaviour and conduct around the school, and in lessons, are exemplary. Their attitudes to learning are consistently positive. You have introduced a system, 'gallery critique', which is used effectively to provide pupils with the skills to identify how their work can be improved. Consequently, pupils' high level of commitment to learning is reflected in the standards of presentation of their work and the time they take to reflect upon, critique and improve their work across all subjects. This practice, combined with teachers' consistent application of the school's new marking and feedback system, results in many pupils making accelerated progress in a range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.

You and your deputy headteacher create a culture in which all staff share responsibility for continuously reviewing and improving the quality of education that pupils receive. As a result, new assessment systems have been introduced seamlessly, leading to continuously improving standards, particularly in the early years and key stage 1. Although you have established these systems in almost every subject, you rightly identify that a few subject leaders have only just begun to fully monitor and track pupils' progress in their area of responsibility. I agree that this is one of the areas for the school to consolidate as the year progresses.

Governors are also instrumental in ensuring that the standards of education at the school are consistently high. They provide effective challenge to you and your leaders and have a strong strategic overview of the main priorities for improvement. They are aware of what needs to be done and how you will go about achieving it.

At the previous inspection, pupils' attendance was identified as an area for improvement. You immediately addressed this issue and introduced a range of attendance rewards which have had a demonstrable impact. Over the past three years, pupils' attendance has been above the national average, and persistent absence has decreased and is now well below the national average.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. You and your staff team ensure that pupils' safety is given the highest priority. Parents and carers agree, overwhelmingly, that their children are safe and well looked after.

Pupils who spoke with me discussed how their personal, social and health education lessons cover a range of topics that teach them to stay safe, including online safety and bullying on social media. The 'Digital Falcons', ambassadors for internet safety and technology, take their role very seriously.

You ensure that staff receive regular and thorough training, equipping them with the skills and knowledge to know what to look for and how to report children who might be at risk of harm. Staff are vigilant, raising concerns quickly, so that even the smallest issues are identified and acted on. Your leadership team makes referrals to external agencies swiftly. Team members take guidance from the local authority safeguarding helpline to inform their decisions and ensure that families receive the right support to meet their needs. The records kept by your designated senior person (DSP) for child protection are meticulous, enabling you and the deputy DSP to have a thorough overview of all child protection cases and the actions taken to keep pupils safe.

The governor with responsibility for safeguarding meets regularly with your deputy headteacher to conduct a range of safeguarding checks. This process ensures that record-keeping is of consistently good quality, the site is safe and secure, and requirements for recruiting staff are followed precisely.

You and your bursar have created an effective system for ensuring that all adults who work at, and visit, the school are appropriately checked. The single central record, which records this information, is carefully and accurately maintained. We discussed the need for certain staff, for example higher teaching and learning assistants who are teaching whole classes, to be checked against the prohibition from teaching list. You quickly identified three adults who had moved into this role and checked them immediately, bringing your records up to date.

## **Inspection findings**

- My first key line of enquiry, to ascertain whether the school remained good, focused on how well the curriculum catered for the needs of the most able pupils. You are aware that in the 2017 key stage 2 statutory assessments, a few high prior attaining pupils did not progress as well as they should from their starting points. I reviewed the data with your deputy headteacher. He was able to demonstrate how almost all high prior attaining pupils in the cohort of 14 reached their potential.
- Inspection findings show that the curriculum is rich, interesting and ignites pupils' interest in learning. Pupils enthuse over the exciting and motivating opportunities they have to explore their learning, both academically and creatively. Pupils respond exceptionally well to the planned opportunities you have implemented to allow for key reading, writing and mathematics skills to be used and applied across the curriculum. Pupils love the challenge of learning and are resilient to failure.
- There is consistently strong evidence of stretch and challenge for the most able pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure across the school and they use questioning extremely effectively to challenge the most able pupils to make good

progress. Teachers ensure that learning activities are adapted so they are challenging enough to enable pupils to achieve the best they can. Through the gifted and talented programme, pupils are given extended opportunities to explain their thinking and are set challenges that deepen their knowledge and understanding. A group of pupils who attend these sessions described opportunities for 'critical and deep thinking' and 'a love of learning'. Nonetheless, you agreed with me that prior assessment information could be used even more precisely to ensure that all most-able pupils are making the progress of which they are capable.

- In 2017, the progress of pupils in key stage 2 in mathematics was slightly below that of the 2016 cohort. For this reason, my second key line of enquiry looked at how leaders ensure that pupils are making at least good progress from their starting points. Pupils' calculation skills are strong. However, through robust analysis, you rightly identified a need to focus on improving pupils' application of their number knowledge to problem and reasoning questions, especially in upper key stage 2. You and your mathematics leaders have quickly implemented your own approach, called 'the five-minute challenges', which is already having a positive impact on pupils' consistency, as well as their application of number skills to contextual problems and reasoning.
- Teachers provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities to develop their mathematics skills. For example, in science, Year 3 pupils discussed why they would measure the distance a car travelled down a ramp with a tape measure instead of a ruler. In geography, pupils used their mathematics skills to compare the heights of mountain ranges and, in design and technology, measuring and calculation skills were used to design and create pneumatic dragons. All of these opportunities help to strengthen pupils' core skills and motivate them to apply their mathematical knowledge.
- Teachers rightly focus strongly on reasoning and problem-solving skills within lessons. Pupils' books demonstrate how skills are built upon sequentially to allow pupils to consolidate their knowledge and apply previous concepts. For example, moving from column addition of four-digit numbers in the five-minute mathematics challenge to introducing decimals, and decimal addition and subtraction. The teacher then finished the lesson with differentiated word problems which required pupils to apply their skills to interpret and complete decimal-related problems. You now want to ensure that this approach is used consistently across the school.
- My final key line of enquiry focused on how accurately teachers use assessment information to ensure that teaching meets the needs of all pupils. This was identified as an area for improvement at the previous inspection. Leaders and teachers have a well-established approach to tracking pupils' attainment. You carefully map the progress of pupils at half termly intervals and ensure that pupils who are not making the progress they are capable of are identified quickly and supported to catch up. You have been particularly successful in accelerating the progress of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium.
- Teachers consistently use the school's feedback system in lessons to identify where pupils are in their learning. Teachers then identify and quickly resolve

misconceptions and ask insightful questions to promote pupils' deeper thinking skills. Pupils are acutely aware of how to improve their work and are instrumental in their own development through the 'gallery critique' approach you have adopted. Work in pupils' books shows how insightful feedback and carefully planned learning activities, which match pupils' needs, facilitate good and better progress in lessons and over time.

- In reading, writing and mathematics, leaders hold regular meetings to track pupils' progress towards their end of year targets. Governors are also involved in these reviews, enabling them to ask challenging, detailed questions to hold leaders to account for pupils' progress. You are currently in the process of embedding this system across all subjects.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the good practice in mathematics is used more widely, especially in upper key stage 2, to make sure that pupils confidently and consistently transfer their number skills to contextual problems
- they continue to refine and embed systems for all subject leaders to monitor and track pupils' progress in line with the school's policy
- prior assessment information for the most able pupils is used even more precisely, so that any variations in pupils' progress are identified and acted on quickly.

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

Yours sincerely

Kerry Grubb-Moore  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, your senior leaders and bursar, seven governors, and a selection of subject leaders and teachers. I met formally with a group of pupils and talked informally to other pupils during our learning walk and at lunchtime. Together, we visited every classroom.

Alongside your English and mathematics leaders, I reviewed a range of pupils' books. Throughout the inspection, I scrutinised a range of documents, including: attendance information; behaviour logs; child protection files; pupil progress and attainment data; the school's self-evaluation and development priorities; governor

minutes and your monitoring of teaching and learning.

I considered the 122 pupil responses and 14 staff responses to Ofsted's questionnaires. I also reviewed the 76 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.