

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



9 February 2018

Miss Susan Thornley  
Acting Headteacher  
Bromesberrow St Mary's Church of England (Aided) Primary School  
Albright Lane  
Bromesberrow  
Ledbury  
Herefordshire  
HR8 1RT

Dear Miss Thornley

### **Short inspection of Bromesberrow St Mary's Church of England (Aided) Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 24 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 January 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Following the last inspection, leaders were asked to develop teachers' ability to provide the right level of challenge for pupils to help them to make rapid progress in all subjects. Over time, most pupils reach expected standards at the end of key stage 1 and 2. In 2016, most pupils achieved expected standards in all subjects at key stage 2 and several pupils achieved higher standards. Most pupils achieved expected standards in reading and mathematics at key stage 1.

In 2017, compared to the previous year, progress in all subjects declined at key stage 2, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. However, progress for disadvantaged pupils in reading and mathematics was strong. Fewer pupils overall attained expected standards in reading, writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling than the previous year. Very few disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities achieved expected standards in all subjects. Attainment in reading and mathematics at key stage 1 was above that of pupils nationally.

The school's current assessment information which you shared with me, along with evidence from observations of learning, reveals that teaching helps pupils to make steady progress. However, only a minority of pupils make accelerated progress and some pupils

do not make enough progress to catch up from low starting points.

The last inspection also recommended that leaders should monitor teaching and learning more effectively to make sure pupils are learning enough. By the end of key stages 1 and 2, effective teaching ensures that the majority of pupils develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to achieve the standards expected of them in all subjects. However, leaders' actions do not always ensure that teaching consistently helps pupils to learn what they should. As a result, children in the early years, and the school's most able pupils, do not consistently achieve what they are capable of. This means that too few children leave the early years foundation stage prepared for Year 1 and few pupils reach higher standards at the end of each key stage. Our review of current pupils' learning identified that activities are not always suitably matched to pupils' age or ability and this limits what they are able to achieve.

Since you took on the role of acting headteacher, almost a year ago, you have swiftly identified the key priorities for the school. You are devoted to supporting pupils and are committed to working closely with all adults to continue to improve outcomes for pupils. Your clear understanding and dedication help you to develop well-focused action plans. You have also enlisted the help of the local authority and an education consultant to support you to set targets and review your actions. This is helping you to evaluate and refine your plans as necessary.

Pupils enjoy school and they are well-mannered and respectful, because they know what is expected of them. Adults form positive and caring relationships with pupils and value their contributions. As a result, pupils listen carefully in lessons and are keen to join in with activities teachers provide for them. Pupils comment that they enjoy school, feel safe and teachers help them improve. However, a few pupils note that work is sometimes too easy.

Governors have a good understanding of the school's main priorities and are keen to support the school to improve. However, they recognise that they need to develop their monitoring of the school's work so that they can provide appropriate support and challenge to hold the school leaders to account.

Staff who responded to the survey are proud to be part of the school. They are motivated to improve outcomes for pupils because they feel respected and encouraged by leaders.

The overwhelming majority of parents who shared their views are very positive about what the school provides for their children. Parents typically remark that their children are happy at school, gaining in confidence and becoming successful learners. Some parents comment that 'there is a lovely friendly atmosphere at the school' and 'concerns are dealt with quickly'. However, another remarked, 'I am not sure it extends the more able pupils.'

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

All adults at the school provide a welcoming and caring environment and, as a result, pupils say that they feel safe. You take a personalised approach to helping pupils who have specific needs and place pupils' safety and well-being at the heart of all that you do. You provide regular updates to training for staff, which ensures that they know how to

recognise and act when they believe a pupil may be at risk. You keep detailed and secure records of any concerns and you know who to contact when pupils require additional help. You regularly check the impact of your actions, which helps you to evaluate the effectiveness of the support that you provide. This helps you to identify when you need to take further action. Pastoral care is strong. You understand that some pupils require targeted emotional and social support. Parents comment that this is helping to improve their children's confidence and ability to learn.

Your commitment to keeping pupils safe means that you carry out all necessary checks to ensure that adults are safe to work with pupils. This information is recorded in detail on the school's single central record. The school has up-to-date policies, carries out thorough risk assessments and there are clearly understood procedures in the event of an emergency.

Staff set high expectations for behaviour and, as a result, pupils behave well. Pupils say that adults help them and they know who to go to if they have any worries. Pupils understand the different forms of bullying and comment that it is rare. However, they say adults would sort it out quickly if it did occur. Pupils can explain how to stay safe when using the internet. For example, they know not to share personal information when online.

## **Inspection findings**

- We agreed that my first line of enquiry would investigate how effectively leaders at all levels are improving teaching in the early years and Year 1, particularly in phonics. This is because, for several years, too few children have reached expected standards at the end of the early years foundation stage. In addition, following a period of considerable improvement, outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check declined considerably last year.
- Together, we reviewed the school's assessment of pupils' progress and observed learning in lessons and books. Pupils clearly enjoy exploring and finding things out and, as a result, they engage enthusiastically in learning. For example, pupils enjoy developing their science and mathematics skills by observing and measuring how fast and how far a satsuma and a toy car travel down a ramp. The information you shared with me shows that pupils make steady progress and some pupils who need to catch up make accelerated progress. This is because teaching is focused on the specific skills pupils need to develop to make better progress. However, teaching does not routinely help all pupils, including the most able pupils, to make consistently strong progress. This means that they are hindered from reaching the highest possible standards they are capable of.
- We agreed that two further lines of enquiry would focus on how leaders are improving achievement in writing and mathematics; and how effectively teaching increases the proportion of pupils who reach higher standards. While most pupils reach expected standards at the end of key stages 1 and 2, too few pupils reach higher standards.
- Pupils happily undertake the activities that teachers set for them, because they find them interesting. For example, younger pupils enjoy writing stories and older pupils enthusiastically read through a text to identify examples of rhetorical questions, metaphors and personification. A pupil confidently explained 'my heart danced' is

personification 'because your heart doesn't really dance'. Our joint review of pupils' learning and of your own assessment information confirm that current pupils are making steady progress. However, too often, work is not sufficiently challenging for pupils' age or ability. As a result, pupils are neither routinely making the progress they need to catch up nor achieving the highest standards that they are capable of.

- My final line of enquiry was to establish how effectively leaders and governors have improved pupils' attendance, particularly those who have SEN and/or disabilities. This is because, following a period of considerable improvement, attendance has declined in recent years. Too many pupils have missed too much school. Pupils are inspired to attend school more regularly and they settle to work positively, because they know adults will help them. You have rightly identified attendance as an improvement target for the school. You are acutely aware that when pupils are not in school, they are unable to benefit from all that the school has to offer. The progress that they make is therefore limited. You relentlessly pursue the reasons for pupils' absence, which is helping you to improve attendance. You continue to work hard with parents to emphasise the importance of pupils' regular attendance. You provide incentives such as stickers and prizes to reward good attendance and this motivates many pupils to attend regularly. However, attendance is still not yet high enough overall.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they improve teaching in the early years so that more children achieve expected and higher standards at the end of the early years foundation stage
- they improve phonics teaching, so that pupils consistently reach the standards expected of them in reading, particularly at the end of Year 1
- teachers develop assessment, so that learning provides sufficient challenge for all pupils and they routinely achieve the highest standards they are capable of
- they continue to address the issues that limit the attendance of pupils who are frequently absent.

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

Catherine Beeks  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and the headteacher, who is due to come back from maternity leave in March. I also met with a group of governors and spoke with the school's local authority adviser on the telephone. During our meetings, we discussed the school's latest assessment information. I also reviewed the school's targeted improvement plans and your evaluation of the impact of your work. I scrutinised the school's single central record and we discussed several matters relating to the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe. Together, we undertook a learning walk to review learning in all classes. We jointly carried out a focused scrutiny of pupils' work in English and mathematics in different year groups. I spoke with pupils in lessons and during breaktime. I also had a formal meeting with a group of pupils to gain their views of school and to hear some of them read. I took account of 16 pupils' responses to the online pupil survey. I talked to parents at the beginning of the school day and reviewed 16 responses to the online survey, Parent View. Staff responses to the online questionnaire were also evaluated.