

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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20 March 2018

Mrs Michelle Heap  
Headteacher  
Baltonsborough Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School  
Ham Street  
Baltonsborough  
Glastonbury  
Somerset  
BA6 8PX

Dear Mrs Heap

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

Following my visit to the school on 22 February 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 March 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are highly respected by staff, pupils and parents and carers alike. All staff say they are proud to work in the school. You are a highly respected school leader. As such, the local authority draws upon your expertise to support other schools. Leaders, governors, teaching staff, support staff and pupils are committed to continuous improvement at Baltonsborough. You have created a happy school community. Typically, parents comment on the school's 'wonderful family feel'.

Baltonsborough is a haven of learning. You have developed a staff team that shares your drive to ensure that pupils become resourceful and resilient learners. Pupils say they love their learning because 'teachers make learning fun'. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. Good teaching and an engaging curriculum inspire pupils to work hard and achieve well in both their personal and academic development. Your staff team has ensured that pupils respect themselves, others, their work and the school. Pupils take great pride in their learning and strive for success. However, you recognise that there is still more to do to ensure that the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school reduces quickly. You work closely with external agencies and are tenacious in ensuring that pupils and their families receive the support they need.

At the time of the previous inspection, you were asked to develop teachers' ability to provide the right level of challenge for pupils of different abilities. Very small

cohorts of children mean that comparisons with national benchmarks should be treated with caution. However, it is clear from pupils' work in books that they are making good progress in all curriculum areas from their different starting points. In particular, your curriculum provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to use their reading and writing skills across all areas of the curriculum. Consequently, pupils read fluently and are able to draw upon a wide-ranging vocabulary to write with confidence and with flair. By the end of key stage 2, pupils leave Baltonsborough well prepared for the next stage of their education with many achieving the higher standards.

Since the previous inspection, the school has taken over the management of the pre-school. Effective leadership ensures that children get off to a very good start. Parents are delighted with how quickly their children settle.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You are committed to keeping children safe and reducing the risk of harm they may face. You have ensured that processes and systems for appointing and training staff are rigorous and well maintained, including in the pre-school. Governors are vigilant in checking this work. Staff are vigilant to spot any child who may be at risk from harm and are diligent in reporting their concerns. You were able to demonstrate how swift action by the school has helped to tackle concerns promptly to prevent risks from escalating. When pupils are absent from school, you have effective procedures to check that they are safe.

Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for. Parents agree. Pupils abide by the school's golden rules, showing kindness and respect to adults and one another. They say that they can share their worries with lots of people in the school. Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare and are confident that on the rare occasions when there are disagreements, there are plenty of people to help, including pupil governors and staff.

### **Inspection findings**

- My first line of enquiry explored how effectively the teaching of reading and phonics in the early years and key stage 1 ensures that different groups of pupils make consistently good progress in reading and in their writing. This is because last year standards in phonics dipped to below the national average for the first time. In addition, too few pupils reached expected standards in reading. This did not represent good progress from their starting points.
- You have implemented a new phonics scheme that is paying dividends. The teaching of phonics is good. Teachers' precise and well-informed assessment of pupils' acquisition of phonics is ensuring that pupils are making good progress. The school's investment in books that support pupils' phonic development is aiding pupils' confidence and their ability to read with accuracy and increasing fluency. Pupils apply their knowledge of sounds well in reading and write confidently.
- Where pupils struggle with reading, you arrange for them to be provided with

extra sessions led by knowledgeable and experienced staff. Consequently, pupils generally make good progress. You are acutely aware of the need to continue to invest in reading resources so that there is a right match of books to support pupils' phonic development. Current outcomes suggest that more pupils will meet the expected standard in phonics this year than previously. Work in books shows that pupils are using their good phonic knowledge to spell well.

- Pupils' enjoyment of reading is well developed. Teaching inspires a love of books. The school has worked successfully to engage parents in reading and sharing books with their children. Pupils write with confidence and even the youngest children are eager to write several sentences. They apply their knowledge of sounds well to spell phonetically plausible words. It is clear that the teaching of phonics and reading in the early years and key stage 1 prepares pupils very well for key stage 2.
- Second, I focused on the effectiveness of the teaching in mathematics in key stage 2 in enabling more pupils to achieve at the higher standards. All pupils have achieved the expected standards in mathematics over the last couple of years. However, compared to reading and writing, fewer pupils have reached the higher standard in mathematics.
- You have introduced a scheme of work in mathematics. Teachers' assessments are accurate and used well to intervene when pupils need additional support. As a result, more pupils are making better progress to attain well. However, unlike in reading or writing, there are few opportunities for mathematics to be taught through other subjects or activities. This limits pupils' ability to deepen their understanding of mathematics by applying their skills, knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils develop and improve their mathematical skills and reasoning through other subjects so that more pupils deepen their understanding and reach the higher standards in mathematics
- they regularly review the strategies in place to promote good attendance so that the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent continues to reduce.

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 Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tracy Hannon  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you to discuss your evaluation of the school. We visited lessons together, looked at the work in pupils' books and spoke to the pupils about their learning. I also heard pupils read. Additionally, I looked at books, external reports and information about pupils' attainment and progress with you. I spoke with four representatives from the governing body. I also took into account the 24 survey responses from Parent View, the online Ofsted questionnaire for parents, as well as the nine responses to the staff questionnaire and 10 responses to the pupil questionnaire. I checked the effectiveness of your safeguarding and recruitment arrangements.