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Mrs Kerri Phelps
Headteacher
Tenbury Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mrs Phelps

Short inspection of Tenbury Church of England Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 27 November 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Tenbury Church of England Primary Academy is a positive and inclusive school community. The pupils and parents who responded to the online surveys pay tribute to your efforts and those of your staff team and governors. You, the governors and staff are very committed to the school's core values, as stated in your welcome message to parents and carers on the school's website, 'We aim to provide all our pupils with a friendly, supportive and vibrant learning environment'. Most parents agree, and many told me, rightly, that yours is a good school that really cares for their children. You and your staff treat pupils and families with dignity and respect.

Leaders and staff provide a curriculum and enrichment activities that make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In addition to the school's core Christian ethos, pupils also learn about the world's other major faiths and customs. Pupils and families are encouraged to engage in what you term, 'the global community'. This is reflected in the well-established links you have with an East African school in Maramba, Tanzania. Special events, such as the recent Tanzanian evening, enable the school community to come together to share and appreciate cultural diversity. In addition, pupils adopt core British values of tolerance and democracy, as well as respecting the views, beliefs and values of others.

You and your staff have improved the quality of teaching since the previous

inspection. Most teachers, but especially those in Year 2 and Year 5, intervene and support pupils to help them correct errors or to help them clarify their learning. However, there is scope to focus on improving pupils' punctuation and spelling in key stage 2 when pupils write independently. In some classes, pupils make repeated or unnecessary spelling or punctuation errors. Assessments also show that too few pupils reach the higher standard or learn in greater depth in writing in key stage 2.

The most effective teaching and learning strike a good balance between whole-class instruction and small-group work. During whole-class discussions, the most effective learning takes place when teachers ask brief, open-ended questions and move pupils on to more productive tasks. In these lessons, we agreed that teachers did not labour class discussions or go over things too much or repeat what was already learned or known to pupils. There is potential to share this good practice with all staff, as in some lessons, the pace of learning slowed when class discussions were too long or drawn out. We could also see that the most able pupils in some lessons could be given more challenging work. The teaching of mathematics remains a strength and this is borne out by consistently good national assessment results in both key stages 1 and 2 over the last three years.

Teachers are improving the achievement of many disadvantaged pupils. In some classes, the number of disadvantaged pupils is very small. This makes it difficult to draw reliable conclusions about their achievement compared with that of others nationally who are not disadvantaged. There is, however, potential to continue lifting the achievement of all disadvantaged pupils by making better use of assessment information.

In addition to providing a varied and stimulating curriculum, particularly in the creative and fine arts, leaders and staff have improved pupils' use of information and communication technology (ICT). Again, this was cited as relatively weak at the time of the previous inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose. Staff vetting and checking systems are rigorous. All the parents I spoke with agreed that pupils are safe in school and are very well cared for by the staff. You and the staff adopt both a caring and robust approach to follow up absenteeism to make sure that pupils are safe when not in school. This was part of a key line of enquiry because of last year's high rate of persistent absenteeism. As you know, I judged that you and the staff are diligent in keeping records to follow up absenteeism. This is helping to encourage the small number of families that this applies to in sending their children to school regularly and on time.

There are well-defined and clear referral procedures so that teaching, support, administrative and ancillary staff are aware of whom to go to if they are concerned about a child's welfare or safety.

Inspection findings

- You provide strong and effective leadership and set high expectations of pupils and staff. The welfare, care and attention given to pupils are strong features of the school's work.
- Early years provision remains effective and is well managed in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Children experience varied and stimulating opportunities to play and learn together in safe and secure indoor and outdoor areas. The teaching of phonics is consistent and effective in both early years and key stage 1.
- The creative and fine arts are strong features of the school's curriculum. I could see many high-quality displays of pupils' artwork. The magnificent sculpture of a Chinese dragon, in preparation for the forthcoming celebration of Chinese New Year, is one of many examples of the school's excellent creative curriculum.
- Although the achievement of some disadvantaged pupils is improving, there is potential to do more. Assessment information is not being used enough to identify the most effective interventions for all disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have improved ICT provision since the previous inspection. Pupils now have better access to mobile tablet devices and computers. You also explained that you have plans to extend ICT provision by incorporating more opportunities for pupils to learn about control technology and programming.
- In some classes, teachers offer the right level of challenge to the most able pupils. However, there are occasions when teachers do not adapt tasks to extend pupils' learning.
- There is a good range of independent writing, but too few of the most able pupils reach the highest standards or learn in greater depth in key stage 2.
- Governance remains a strength. Governors are skilled and effective in overseeing the work of the school. They offer you and your staff support and challenge, so they hold leaders to account for staff performance and pupils' achievements.
- The Bishop Anthony Educational Trust (BAET) provides effective support, training and guidance. Leaders and governors reported that this support and guidance have improved more recently because of the regular and effective contact leaders have with one of the trust's school improvement advisers.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the current improvements to pupils' progress in writing in key stage 2 are sustained, by:
 - teaching more effective strategies for pupils to improve spellings and their use of punctuation when writing independently
 - improving the achievement of the most able pupils, so that more of them reach higher standards and learn in greater depth in writing.

- there is a continued focus on sustaining improvements to teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - using assessment information to identify the most effective interventions aimed at supporting learning for disadvantaged pupils
 - offering more challenge for the most able pupils in all classes
 - sharing good practice to strike an effective balance between whole-class and small-group teaching and intervention.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the board of trustees and chief executive officer of Bishop Anthony Educational Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Hereford, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Worcestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the deputy headteacher throughout the day's inspection, including visiting lessons with you both in all classes. I also met three members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. During our visits to lessons, we observed teaching and learning, looked at some pupils' work in books and spoke to pupils and staff. I also spoke with pupils during breaktime and lunchtime. I spoke to some parents at the start of the school day and considered the 19 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. I analysed the eight responses to the online Ofsted survey from school staff and the 18 responses from pupils to their online survey.

I scrutinised the school's development and action plans and leaders' own evaluations of the school's work. We discussed and checked monitoring files and assessments of pupils' work and progress. I met with a school improvement adviser from the multi-academy trust, BAET, and we discussed external reviews, evaluations of the school's effectiveness and the level of support provided by the trust. I met with a group of pupils from key stage 2 to discuss their work and progress, as well as their views about school. I checked staff vetting and safeguarding procedures to determine whether the school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective.