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Mrs Claire McKeown  
Headteacher  
Weston-under-Penyard Church of England Primary School  
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Weston-under-Penyard  
Ross-on-Wye  
Herefordshire  
HR9 7PA

Dear Mrs McKeown

### **Short inspection of Weston-under-Penyard Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 22 January 2019, 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 December 2014.

#### **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 and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

The school's vision is to 'be the best you can be'. This is embodied through the work of governors, leaders, staff and pupils. As a result, individual pupils, regardless of their starting points, are very well supported to make strong progress both academically and more widely. You and the governors set very high expectations and staff and pupils rise to this challenge.

Since the previous inspection, you and your team have strengthened outcomes across the school. This has been achieved through a focus on pupils' individual needs and an innovative approach to the curriculum. You and the governors have federated with another small, rural school and, by sharing leadership and professional development opportunities, you have increased the school's capacity to sustain and secure further developments. The number of pupils attending the school has doubled. You have also expanded the school's provision by opening an on-site nursery and offering before- and after-school childcare.

Pupils really enjoy coming to school and show a love of learning. Across the school, many pupils have opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example as school council representatives or monitors. Pupils are proud of their contribution to school life and these opportunities help to prepare them well for the next stage in their education. Classrooms are welcoming and positive environments and there are strong relationships between adults and pupils.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at your previous inspection. Pupils now demonstrate appropriate punctuation and grammar skills in their writing. You are not complacent, however, and despite strong outcomes in spelling, you have recently introduced a new approach to the teaching of spelling to increase pupils' awareness of spelling patterns and related vocabulary. More generally, you, your leadership team and the governors are continually striving to improve the quality of education provided. There remain some inconsistencies in teaching and in approaches to making the curriculum more rich and engaging.

Spiritual, moral and social education continues to be a strength of the school and you have extended this to ensure greater provision for pupils' cultural development. Through art, music, drama, faith, visits and literature, pupils learn about the traditions and lives of others. This view of 'one big world' effectively supports pupils' understanding of tolerance and respect for others.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school. All those who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire said that they would recommend the school to others. One parent wrote, 'I am very happy with the school. They get the best out of the children.' Another said, 'I am continually impressed by the fantastic approach to teaching and the supportive, caring environment.' Feedback from staff and pupils was equally as positive, with everyone being proud to be associated with the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is an effective culture of safeguarding within the school. You have created a safeguarding team that ensures that the school is a safe environment for pupils. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils are well cared for at all times and they know how to share any worries and concerns that they may have. Pupils spoken to said that they feel safe in school and that the adults are there to look after them. They said that behaviour is typically good and that they have not experienced any bullying.

All staff have regular and appropriate training to help them understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe from harm. Staff are clear about what they should do if they have any safeguarding concerns. You work with a wide range of external agencies and you are persistent in following up any concerns about a pupil's welfare, should that occur. Governors understand their role in overseeing the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures.

## Inspection findings

- You and your staff have taken decisive action to improve pupils' achievement across the school. Over the last two years, pupils' progress has increased in all subjects. In 2018, attainment was above the national average at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. Almost all pupils achieved the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils also achieved well at the higher standards. You credit a number of these improvements to changes in your curriculum that have resulted in pupils who are more actively engaged in their learning.
- You and your leadership team have created a rich curriculum that is unique to your federation. Your aim is to enable pupils to thrive in an ever-changing world by developing their subject knowledge, and by teaching them how to be independent learners. Staff measure pupils' work against the national curriculum to ensure that all subjects are covered at the right level for the pupils' ages and abilities.
- Each class project, based on pupils' interests and input, links different elements of the curriculum, including English and mathematics where appropriate. Two classes are currently studying 'giants'. One is learning about a 'literary giant', Shakespeare, by studying 'The Tempest' and 'Julius Caesar', and the second class is learning about space and flight. Projects are enhanced by visits and visitors, such as recent trips to Stratford-upon-Avon and Aerospace Bristol. Younger pupils are learning about 'lands far, far away'. This topic was enhanced by the use of virtual reality headsets that enabled the pupils to 'travel' to Antarctica.
- Teachers often plan high-quality lessons to meet the needs of pupils within their class. Teachers and teaching assistants question pupils effectively, encouraging them to explain their thinking and to apply their knowledge in different contexts. Pupils' efforts and achievements across a range of subjects are readily acknowledged. This approach develops pupils' self-esteem and resilience. As each topic develops, teachers and pupils often learn together. This helps pupils to understand that learning is a lifelong skill. You and your leadership team are focused on ensuring that teaching is of a consistently high standard across all classes.
- Phonics is taught well, starting in Nursery. Children in Reception and key stage 1 read from books that are closely matched to their phonetic abilities and they increasingly apply their developing phonics knowledge when writing new words. The great majority of pupils achieve the expected standard in the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1.
- The school is highly inclusive and makes all pupils feel welcome. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress from their starting points. Leaders are effective in identifying pupils' additional needs, using the expertise of external agencies when required. You work closely with parents and keep them well informed of progress. Leaders provide high-quality support for teachers and teaching assistants. This means that they have the expertise and strategies that they need to ably support the pupils.

- Ensuring the well-being of both pupils and staff is important to everyone involved with the school. As one member of staff said, 'Well-being is not an add-on. It is integrated into our curriculum as one of the many important ingredients.' This approach has helped you to create a positive climate for learning.
- The great majority of pupils attend school regularly, and overall attendance is in line with the national average. You carefully track attendance and understand the circumstances behind pupils' absences. You work closely with families and external agencies to try to improve attendance when it falls below an acceptable level. The procedures you and your staff follow, including contacting parents on the first day of absence, help to ensure that pupils are safe and not at risk of going missing from education.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the exciting and innovative curriculum continues to develop to meet the needs and abilities of all pupils
- the high quality of teaching and learning is maintained across the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Crooks  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and other members of staff. I met with four representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. I held telephone conversations with the interim director of education for the Diocese of Hereford, a representative of Herefordshire local authority and your school improvement partner. I talked with some parents at the start of the school day and with some pupils, both formally and informally.

Together we visited all classrooms where we observed teaching and learning, spoke to some pupils and looked at examples of their work. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. I scrutinised several documents, including your school self-evaluation, curriculum plans, assessment information and documents relating to safeguarding.

I took account of 27 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 19 free-text comments received electronically. I also took account of 14 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 18 responses to the pupil questionnaire.