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17 July 2019

Mr Nick Crabtree  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Crabtree

### **Short inspection of St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 July 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 May 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment in September 2017 you have worked alongside the staff to ensure that the school is a vibrant and welcoming learning environment. There is an air of calmness in the school. Pupils behave well and listen attentively. Teachers take care to celebrate and promote examples of pupils' best work in colourful and interesting displays.

Together with the senior leaders, you have evaluated the effectiveness of the school with care. Through the school improvement plan you have identified relevant priorities that are grounded in evidence that leaders have gathered. You evaluate actions regularly, ensuring that there is a constant drive for improvement.

Together with the staff, you have invested time in developing the school curriculum. This provides pupils with many opportunities to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills. The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils' artwork in relation to Remembrance Day and writing to mark the 75th anniversary of D-Day were of a very high quality. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, make good progress across the curriculum. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they make progress similar to that of other pupils nationally. Most pupils reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Through the effective use of the pupil premium funding, disadvantaged pupils make progress which is the same as, or in some cases better than, that of their peers.

Pupils arrive at school in a calm and orderly manner. They said that they enjoy school and their learning. They articulate their understanding of the school's mission statement well. They know what it means to be confident, considerate and cooperative. Staff have taught them effective strategies to deal with frustration and use their skills of perseverance and determination. They said that sometimes boys and girls can be silly. However, they were quick to point out that teachers were very fair and quick in their responses to any concerns. They enjoy the range of clubs and activities that the school offers them, for example sports such as lacrosse and dodgeball. Their understanding of safeguarding is astute and they are knowledgeable about how to stay safe while online. They know not to talk to strangers or share sensitive information. They behave well in lessons and while moving around the school.

Parents and carers are supportive of the school. Those that I spoke to, and those who responded to the Ofsted surveys, were overwhelmingly positive. Parents appreciate that you are visible in the mornings to greet them. Many parents stated that you and the teachers go above and beyond what is expected to meet their needs.

Governors support you and the senior leaders well. They are knowledgeable about the progress of the pupils. They are honest in their evaluation of the school's effectiveness and monitor the spending of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND well. They challenge leaders about the impact of the spending on pupils' performance. They have ensured that safeguarding procedures are effective and that the school's web-filtering system is fit for purpose.

At the previous inspection, school leaders were asked to improve the quality of middle leadership and sustain the already good quality of education. Since your appointment as headteacher you have made these your key priorities. Subject leadership is now well established across the school. Leaders make regular checks on the quality of work in pupils' books and the accuracy of teacher's assessments. They have created action plans for their subjects that link to the whole-school development priorities. Leaders for geography, history, art and physical education (PE) spoke to me about their work and how they promote their subjects. For example, the art leader has ensured that pupils' work is displayed in the local library and swimming pool. The leaders for geography and history have carefully considered how pupils' map skills progress over time. The leader for PE has worked alongside colleagues from across the local area to ensure that sport continues to be given a high profile. However, despite these many improvements, they have not maximised opportunities to model or share good practice among staff within the school. As a result, they are not capitalising on the strong skills among the staff to develop and enhance further the already good teaching across the curriculum.

Inspectors also asked you to bring about improvements in the quality of writing, not only in English, but across the curriculum. School leaders quickly addressed this issue by successfully working with support from the local authority to redesign the curriculum because it was limiting pupils' writing opportunities. In doing this, you now provide pupils with opportunities to write widely and often. Senior leaders

make regular checks on the quality of pupils' writing. You work closely with partner schools to check the accuracy of your assessments. Pupils enjoy their writing because they write about interesting topics across the curriculum. For example, in key stage 2 they sequence their writing when describing the life cycle of a plant. Older pupils consider whether people should have to pay for access to recycling facilities. They write biographies and enjoy writing various forms of poetry. In key stage 1, pupils write interesting facts about the formation of sea stacks as part of their wider geography work. From observing learning and viewing pupils' books, I could clearly see that writing is now a strength of the school. Published assessment data and your own school assessment data indicate that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, make good progress.

The final area that inspectors asked you to improve was the provision of opportunities for children in the early years to develop their speaking skills. The early years staff actively plan and develop opportunities for children to speak, cooperate and learn. Effective questioning by adults enables them to develop their answers and explain their thinking. This was evident when children engaged and participated in a range of activities and role-play opportunities. For example, a group of boys were observed working together, listening to one another's ideas as they cooperated to construct a model pirate ship. Children are clear in their understanding of what is expected of them and they discuss their learning confidently.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You continue to ensure that safeguarding is given a high priority in the school. You, along with the staff, promote a positive and open culture. Staff are aware of their responsibilities. They have received relevant and up-to-date training in basic awareness of the importance of safeguarding. They have also received training in 'Prevent' that allows them to spot potential signs of radicalisation more easily. Staff that I spoke to were clear about their duties and knew how to report concerns.

You have made careful checks on the suitability of adults who work in the school. You, along with four members of staff, have received enhanced training in safeguarding. You keep careful records of work which supports vulnerable pupils and their families. You engage well with a number of partner agencies, including children's social care, the local authority's well-being service, the police, school health and the fire service. You ensure that pupils and families receive appropriate levels of support.

### **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection I focused on three lines of enquiry. The first of these related to attendance. Published information for the past two academic years has highlighted that pupils' rates of absence and rates of persistent absence were much higher than the national average for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. You have recognised this and focused your improvement plans to bring about changes. You continue to work in close partnership with parents and

the local-authority attendance team. This is somewhat challenging as the school accepts pupils from three neighbouring local authorities. Good attendance is promoted through weekly newsletters. Pupils enjoy earning certificates and extra breaktimes for good attendance. You have now begun to issue fixed-penalty notices to discourage poor attendance. Your efforts have improved the overall rate of attendance. However, although you have reduced previously high rates of persistent absenteeism, they continue to remain higher than the national average, including for pupils who are disadvantaged.

- The second area that I focused on related to the leadership of SEND. Leaders carefully consider the wide range of support that pupils receive. They assess the progress of pupils regularly and tailor support accordingly. The leader for SEND has provided training for staff to help them better sequence learning. Pupils receive effective support in classes. Staff are aware of the various needs of pupils and ensure that they have the correct resources to help them to complete their learning. The leader for SEND, along with the teachers, has produced detailed support plans for each individual pupil. The views of parents and pupils have been carefully considered. From looking at a range of pupils' performance information and work in their books, it is evident that they make good progress in a wide range of subjects over time. Work is well matched to challenge them to achieve their best.
- The final area that I looked at during the inspection related to the early years. Published information indicates that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has declined slowly over the past three years. You, along with the early years leader, have brought about changes to the curriculum to improve children's outcomes. The curriculum is now led by the interests of the children. Through different themes and topics, leaders carefully plan activities to promote writing, reading and number. For example, children chatted while they used a water pump to discuss capacity. They used their fishing rods to catch big numbers and practised saying them. They wrote freely about their recent trip to a safari park. The teaching of writing is given a high priority. As part of their science and mathematics work, children grew beans and made careful measurements of growth. In their artwork, they have created wonderful spiral collages using a range of beans of different shapes and sizes. Adult questioning is effective in promoting good learning. However, records of careful and insightful observations of children are not readily available for parents. Leaders do not provide parents with enough information about the progress of their children so that they can support them better at home.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they provide subject leaders with opportunities to model and share good practice so that the quality of teaching is enhanced further
- they continue with efforts to reduce rates of persistent absence further
- early years staff provide parents with better information about the progress of their children.

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

Yours sincerely

John Donald  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you and the senior-leadership team. I met with four members of the middle-leadership team, including the leader for SEND. I met with five members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. Together we visited classes in each key stage. I viewed examples of pupils' work and spoke to them about their learning. I spoke to pupils informally at breaktimes.

I examined a wide range of school documentation including the school's self-evaluation and the school development plan. I scrutinised the single central safeguarding record and viewed examples of staff training. I spoke to parents before school and considered the 29 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 23 free-text responses. I considered the 18 responses to the staff survey and the 48 responses to the pupil survey.