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19 January 2017

Mr Christopher Sargeant  
Headteacher  
Morchard Bishop Church of England Primary School  
Church Street  
Morchard Bishop  
Crediton  
Devon  
EX17 6PJ

Dear Mr Sargeant

### **Short inspection of Morchard Bishop Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 January 2017, 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. You have made significant staffing changes, appointing staff who bring with them specific skills and expertise to address the areas you, and governors, identified as priorities for improvement. The decision to incorporate the pre-school into the primary school's management structure has been well considered. As a result, the school is achieving higher standards than previously.

One of the marked features of your school is the involvement of a large number of villagers in the life of the school. You have ensured the school is at the heart of the community. You have involved many villagers who have particular skills and expertise to support and enhance the school's work, some of whom are now governors.

The Two Moors Learning Partnership, a partnership of five local primary schools, provides useful support and challenge to Morchard Bishop and allows you to support and challenge the other school leaders. Added to this, governors have commissioned support in specific areas. As a result, you, governors and staff are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement raised at the last inspection. You recognise, however, that there is scope to improve even further and have plans in place to bring this about. The work to develop pupils' cultural

knowledge and understanding is now well embedded into the curriculum. Pupils enjoy the experiences staff provide, particularly those which involve your partner school in Uganda. Younger pupils also follow, with interest, the journeys of Digit Bear and learn about the various countries and parts of the United Kingdom which he visits.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured staff and governors are suitably trained in a wide range of aspects of safeguarding, including the checks required when recruiting staff. They know the risks young people face, such as extremism, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation, the signs of harm and the actions to take when they are concerned.

Staff have prepared pupils well to face risks in society. In discussions with pupils during the inspection, they explained how to stay safe, including when using the internet and social media.

Pupils' attendance is good and appropriate use is made of the education welfare officer, when necessary, to check pupils are safe.

### **Inspection findings**

- The fresh approach you introduced a few years ago to the teaching of writing is paying dividends. The investment governors have made, and continue to make, to improve the quality of writing through the appointment of a literacy coordinator, staff training, moderation and monitoring by a specialist adviser is resulting in improved outcomes. In all years, pupils show positive attitudes towards their writing and make strong progress from their varying starting points. Pupils write at greater length and in a wide range of styles. There are no discernible differences between boys and girls. Some pupils continue to make grammatical errors and misuse punctuation because they are not clear about exactly which aspects of their writing need to be improved. Consequently, too few are writing at the highest level.
- In mathematics, teachers plan work for pupils at levels appropriate to their understanding and skills. Pupils' mental arithmetic is improving. You have drawn on the expertise of a volunteer from the village to improve the quality of mathematics teaching and to provide catch-up tutoring for identified pupils. Both of these aspects are helping pupils to move towards the expectations for their age. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are working below the expectations for their age. I observed pupils working hard to fill gaps in their knowledge and skills from Years 3 and 4 where, in the past, teaching had not been as strong. Most pupils choose from a range of methods to perform calculations and explain their understanding of the mathematic operations they use. However, they do not always use the most efficient methods to solve problems.
- In most year groups, disadvantaged pupils are making at least as good and often better progress than their peers. The clear rationale for the use of pupil premium funding and its impact is carefully monitored by governors. Often the impact is

seen in the development of pupils' personal skills, such as their self-esteem and confidence. In turn this is beginning to be seen in improved academic attainment. Where progress has not been as strong in the past, this has often been because the pupils have been new to the school. I observed teaching assistants working well with disadvantaged pupils to ensure they make more rapid progress.

- In the past, few of the most able pupils made the progress they should to achieve the highest standards. Current progress information shows that more of the most able pupils in Years 3 and 4 are working at greater depth. These pupils are able to link different parts of the curriculum and can recall facts appropriate for their age, such as facts about your partner school in Uganda, and they appreciate other cultures. The most able disadvantaged pupils are making good progress and often achieve better than their peers. More widely, across the school, pupils are not aware of the skills they need to develop to achieve the higher scores and teachers do not insist on the very highest standards.
- Governors took responsibility for the previously committee-led pre-school in April 2016. They have ensured that the welfare requirements for children are in place, including sleeping accommodation. There are now stronger links across the early years, including planning learning. Staff in the pre-school benefit from improved training and development opportunities as well as being held to account for the progress of children. Staff in the early years are quick to identify any additional needs that children may have and involve other agencies, such as speech and language specialists to overcome children's communication difficulties. While staff know what children know, understand and can do on an individual basis, the systems to allow you and other staff to monitor and track the progress of children in the early years are not sufficiently well developed.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' outcomes continue to improve, especially for the most able pupils, so they achieve the highest standards
- the assessment system is fully developed and embedded for all years, including in the pre-school, to allow the effective tracking and monitoring of pupils' attainment and identify precisely where intervention is needed.

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

Yours sincerely

Iain Freeland  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I spoke to you, staff, pupils, representatives of the governing body, the local vicar and two parents. You and I made visits to lessons to observe pupils' attitudes to learning and to scrutinise their work. I listened to pupils from key stage 1 read.

A range of documentary evidence was considered, which included the school's self-evaluation, the development plan, and attendance and safeguarding documentation. I also looked at information about pupils' progress, governing body minutes and notes of visits by governors and other headteachers from the Two Moors Learning Partnership.

In addition, I took account of 45 responses to the Parent View online survey and 13 responses to the staff survey.

This short inspection focused on:

- the quality of pupil's writing
- the teaching of mathematics, especially with respect to girls' achievement
- disadvantaged pupils' achievement
- the level of challenge for the most able pupils
- pupils' attendance and their safety
- the quality of education for children in the early years.