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Mrs Jody Toone
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Toone

Short inspection of Barby Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 June 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in November 2011. The school converted to an academy and became part of the Peterborough Diocese Education Trust in July 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Governors appointed you in September 2016. Your leadership and that of your senior leader have proved to be a turning point for the school. You addressed head-on the longstanding issues you inherited. For example, there have been significant staff changes. With the support of the Peterborough Diocese Education Trust, you have managed these changes well.

Barby Church of England Primary is a smaller than average-sized primary school. It is a warm, friendly school where staff work closely together. You and your team have ensured that pupils are well cared for and enjoy their learning. As a result, pupils are happy and parents are supportive. Parents speak highly of the work you have done to improve the school. They say you have created a 'kind and compassionate' school.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are respectful and pay close attention in class. As one pupil said, 'This is a small, friendly school. Everyone knows each other, we're a happy community.' Pupils value their learning and enrichment opportunities. For example, a recent visit to the school by magistrates enabled pupils to learn more about internet safety and the consequences of breaking the law. Pupils told the inspector in great detail about the complexities of the legal system.

You encourage pupils to be active in the community through initiatives, such as the 'road safety heroes', and by helping them to organise many successful fundraising projects. You have taught them to understand the importance of respecting others and of valuing diversity. As a result, in addition to leaving at the end of Year 6 with standards above others nationally, pupils are thoughtful, reflective and communicate well.

You and other senior leaders, including the governors, have a clear, strategic vision for raising standards further. Your self-evaluation is accurate and informs subsequent policies, actions and staff training. For example, you recognised that the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of middle leaders needed to improve. It was clear during this inspection that there have been improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. This has ensured that the vast majority of pupils do well in most subjects.

You are helped in your work by a governing body which fulfils its strategic role effectively. As well as giving you strong support, it holds you to account for the progress that different groups of pupils make. Governors have a particular focus on the achievement of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and on disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1, in 2016, was above the national average for the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading and mathematics but below the national average in writing. You have trained staff and reviewed teaching strategies, so improvements have been made this year to both the teaching of, and outcomes in, writing. Additional support is effectively provided to pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average overall. Nevertheless, published data indicates that, for some groups of pupils, attendance was not as high as it should have been last year. However, you can explain convincingly why their attendance was low. This is a small school and the number of pupils in groups with low attendance is small. You work well with families in your community to support pupils to attend school regularly.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Your records are detailed and thorough. Staff and governors receive frequent and up-to-date training. They know what to do to keep pupils safe. You work actively with external agencies and refer your concerns in a timely manner. You make sure that staff are alert to any potential issues and that safeguarding pupils is everyone's responsibility. The checks on staff's suitability to work with children are detailed and thorough.

Pupils are safe and happy in school. They are confident that bullying is rare and that staff deal with this well. They understand that the new behaviour policy means that poor behaviour is not tolerated. Pupils receive and understand guidance on potential risks and how to stay safe in different situations. These include, for example, the risks associated with using social media, mobile phones or when crossing the road. Pupils know whom they can speak to in school if they have any concerns or worries. The vast majority of parents agree that their child feels safe in school.

Inspection findings

- School leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the school's current strengths and areas that need improving. You effectively monitor and review pupils' progress so that standards remain high.
- Since you and the senior leader joined the school in September 2016, you have made rapid changes to the school to drive improvements to teaching and learning. You have been effectively supported by the Peterborough Diocese Education Trust, which has provided guidance and brokered specialists to train teachers and leaders.
- Leaders have ambitious plans for the future. You have recruited two experienced English and mathematics leaders and two teachers for the new academic year. You are confident that these changes will strengthen the capacity of the leadership team to secure further improvements. Two new classrooms are being built and pupils should benefit from new landscaping, which will include a forest schools area.
- You and your staff were disappointed with the 2016 results in the Year 1 phonics screening check. You identified that this was due to some weak teaching. These issues have largely been resolved and pupils are currently doing well. Quality focused teaching for pupils who did not pass the Year 1 phonics screening check has ensured that they are on track to pass this year, in Year 2. Your plans for further developments involving staff restructuring and the appointment of a skilled leader for phonics have the potential to ensure that good progress is sustained.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of key stage 1 in writing was below the national average. You have modified the English curriculum to better meet the needs of pupils and to raise standards. As a result, pupils now get more opportunities to write in depth as well as practise their writing skills in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils' books in Year 3 show that your support to enable them to catch up in writing has been largely effective. Current Year 2 pupils now benefit from excellent teaching and, as a result, pupils are making good progress.
- The small number of disadvantaged pupils broadly achieve in line with or above the national average. You use well the pupil premium funding and the funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure that these pupils make good progress.

- Children's learning journeys and books in the Reception class demonstrate that the vast majority of children make good progress from their different starting points. Where children make less than good progress, additional support is in place to help them catch up. Typically an above-average proportion reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.
- Attendance is in line with the national average overall. However, attendance for some small groups of pupils is low and persistent absence high. Current attendance figures for these groups are improving. You take effective actions to engage parents with prioritising attendance, and realise that these efforts need to be sustained in order to ensure that pupils progress as well as they should.
- Scrutiny of pupils' books across a range of subjects showed that standards of handwriting and presentation are inconsistent across year groups and classes. You agree that teachers' expectations in this area need to be higher.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- there are consistently high expectations for the handwriting and presentation of pupils' work across all subjects and year groups
- attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check continues to improve to above national expectations.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Innes-Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, your senior leader and special educational needs coordinator, the leaders of the early years, English and mathematics, and an improvement officer representing the Peterborough Diocese Education Trust. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day and I met with a group of pupils. I met with four members of the governing body.

We visited classrooms together and I looked at a range of pupils' work. We discussed the progress of different groups of pupils and the school's plans for improvement. I considered the responses of parents from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I scrutinised evidence from a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance, information regarding procedures for safeguarding and monitoring of behaviour, information on how the pupil premium is spent, analysis of attendance and a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding and behaviour. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, out on the playground and in the lunch hall. I checked the school's single central register to ensure that it met current safeguarding regulations.