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Mr Ian Robinson  
Headteacher  
West Monkton Church of England Primary School  
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Dear Mr Robinson

### **Short inspection of West Monkton Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 15 March 2018 with Lizzy Meadows HMI, 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 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.

You have managed the school's rapidly changing circumstances resulting from the new school build. Pupil numbers have more than doubled over the last two years. Despite the challenges with high pupil mobility, in 2017 the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics combined was above the national average.

You lead with integrity and a steely moral purpose, while gently guiding staff and pupils to 'have the courage and confidence to fly' in this inclusive school. You have created a climate where pupils feel safe and happy. They are confident and keen to learn. Strong relationships and positive staff morale contribute well to the school's welcoming atmosphere. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View would recommend the school.

Your management of the school's evolution during the move to the new school justifies much admiration. Pupil numbers have now settled. Consequently, you and your governing body have been able to overhaul the leadership structure in order to provide greater consistency of teaching and improved levels of accountability across the school. New appointments next term will complete the structure.

The school opened its own Nursery in January 2017. This well-led and stimulating environment provides children with a flying start to school. Children are confident

and happy, and settle quickly into school routines. In particular, the strong focus on children's communication, language and literacy skills gives them a very good start.

In the previous inspection you were asked to increase the involvement of middle leaders in driving improvement and checking the effectiveness of actions taken. This work has been largely effective. Middle leaders know their subjects and teams well. In particular, the leader with responsibility for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has a precise and accurate view of the effectiveness of work to support this group of pupils. With your new leadership structure in place, you recognise the need for greater precision of plans linked to pupils' outcomes so that swift action can be taken where progress stalls.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You ensure that safeguarding has a very high profile. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Together with the office manager, you ensure that all necessary checks are made on the suitability of staff, governors and volunteers to work in the school.

Your safeguarding team provides staff with effective training that is up to date so that they and the governing body understand and apply the current guidance. As a result, staff are vigilant in following school procedures to report concerns. You work with a wide range of external agencies to provide expertise to support pupils' welfare.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They are eager to share their pride in the school and know they can share any worries with any adult in school. The curriculum is comprehensive in supporting pupils to stay safe. For example, pupils told me how important it is to protect their personal information online.

### **Inspection findings**

- First, I looked at how effective leaders and governors are in ensuring that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is making a difference. This is because, historically, disadvantaged pupils have not made the progress they could. The number of pupils in receipt of the additional funding has grown considerably to be almost in line with the national average.
- Governors provide effective challenge. Together, you have sought out best practice. Your school is currently working with a local teaching school to explore best practice in accelerating the progress of disadvantaged pupils. You have rightly recognised the need to evaluate leaders' actions more closely to increase the rates of progress for this group of pupils.
- Your recent actions have been effective. Differences between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally are diminishing, particularly in writing and mathematics. Additional interventions to support pupils individually have been effective in improving their ability to read fluently. However, too few disadvantaged pupils with low starting points are catching up quickly enough.
- My second line of enquiry explored the effectiveness of middle leaders in raising standards in reading across the school. Leaders' recent actions to raise the profile

of reading are paying off. Pupils say they enjoy the whole-class quality texts and develop a love of reading.

- In 2017, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard improved for the third year in a row to be above the national average. Pupils' improved phonic knowledge is helping them to read with accuracy. Leaders have drawn upon the expertise of local authority specialists to further support improvements in reading. Consequently, more pupils are reading at the expected standard for their age this year.
- Finally, I focused on the achievement of the most able pupils in mathematics. Historically, too few of these pupils have made good progress to reach the higher standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. Your current focus on strengthening pupils' mathematical reasoning is ensuring that pupils are increasingly well prepared to reach the higher standards in mathematics. However, you recognise that there is more to be done to ensure that these improvements are fully established across the school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans for improvement check the performance of different pupil groups to continue to raise pupils' achievement
- pupils continue to improve their mathematical reasoning skills so that more pupils achieve the higher standards in mathematics
- pupil premium funding has a greater impact on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, particularly those with low starting points in reading.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracy Hannon  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors met with you and your senior leaders during the inspection. I also met with four member of the governing body. In addition, I met with your administrative officer to look at documents related to safeguarding and attendance.

We visited classrooms and looked at samples of work with you and your curriculum leaders. Inspectors talked with pupils during visits to the classroom and spoke with pupils during the lunchtime break.

I took account of the 51 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 37 responses by staff and the 95 responses to the online pupil questionnaire. I reviewed the school's website and considered a range of documents, including your summary of the school's effectiveness, the school's improvement plan and external reports from local authority officers.