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Mrs Emma Bone  
Executive Headteacher  
Warberry CofE Academy  
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Dear Mrs Bone

### **Short inspection of Warberry CofE Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 21 February 2018, 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 June 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained good quality of education in the school since last inspection.

You were appointed after a period of instability for the school in 2015. Prior to your appointment, standards in the school declined. However, since your appointment in 2016 you and your leaders have taken effective action to ensure that Warberry CofE Academy provides its pupils with a good standard of education. Standards and outcomes for pupils have improved and morale in the school is high. All staff speak favourably of the changes you have made. Children make a positive start in the early years and continue to make good progress as they move up through the school.

The last inspection team asked the school to provide further challenge to pupils in writing. In 2017, progress was significantly above the national average and in the highest 10% of schools in the national tests for pupils in Year 6.

You were also tasked with developing the role of middle leaders in school. This has been effective. Actions taken have ensured that middle leaders are effective in their work. Effective staff development, from within the trust, has led to improvements to the quality of teaching.

The vast majority of parents are supportive of the school. The majority who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and those who spoke to me, were positive about the recent improvements. One comment, typical of many

responses, included: 'My daughter is progressing in learning better than I could have ever hoped for. I think the curriculum here is stunning.' However, some parents who responded using the free-text option within Parent View claimed there had been incidents of bullying and are not all in favour of the school being part of the Learning Academy Partnership Trust.

Governors, including trust members, are well informed and provide strategic support and effective challenge to you and your team. They are aware of the areas in need of further improvement. They know the school well and regularly visit to check upon leaders' work. This is because they are tenacious in their approach and leave no stone unturned.

During the inspection, we identified areas where further work is required to develop your plans for continued improvement. You and your leadership team acknowledge that teaching needs to be adapted more quickly to meet the needs of pupils in mathematics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school has rigorous procedures and well-designed systems to manage safeguarding requirements. Leaders maintain comprehensive records and ensure that a culture of vigilance exists among all members of the school community. All staff, and governors, have appropriate and regular training so that they can spot and deal with any concerns swiftly. When I checked school staff's knowledge and understanding of safeguarding, it was clear that they understood their roles and responsibilities and what signs and symptoms to look out for.

You are proactive, and where support from external agencies for vulnerable pupils is not swift enough, you and your well-resourced pastoral team provide your own support from within the trust. As a result, pupils and families are well supported in a timely fashion.

Pupils from across the school told me they feel safe in the school. They know who they can report any worries or concerns to and are adamant that any issues are dealt with swiftly by leaders and teachers. Pupils say that their knowledge of how to stay safe is enhanced further through extra-curricular opportunities. For example, local emergency services regularly visit the school to provide fire safety and e-safety sessions. Pupils told me that bullying was rare and was often confused with 'falling out.'

### **Inspection findings**

- We agreed the key lines of enquiry to check that the school remains good. The first line of enquiry looked at the actions leaders are taking to ensure that the progress and attainment in mathematics for girls and disadvantaged pupils are as positive as they are in English. This is because in 2017 attainment for these groups was below the national average.

- You and your leaders wasted no time in identifying this as an area for improvement. Your sharply focused improvement plans have ensured that current pupils are making stronger progress. Restructuring the curriculum and training for teachers, which included support from the local mathematics hub, have resulted in improved subject knowledge. Consequently, standards in mathematics have risen. However, visits to lessons and pupils' work showed that some teachers are not adjusting their teaching quickly enough to ensure that pupils are challenged to achieve their very best, particularly the most able. As a result, they are not motivated by the activities that are being set. A small proportion of pupils told me that they do not always feel challenged in mathematics.
- My next line of enquiry focused on how well the most able pupils are challenged to achieve their very best in reading and mathematics after they leave the early years. In 2016, fewer of the most able pupils attained as well as other pupils nationally at the end of key stage 1.
- In reading, leaders identified inconsistencies in key stage 1 outcomes as being due to weak and muddled phonics teaching. Phonics is now a strength of the school. Outcomes in the phonics check at the end of Year 1 in 2017 were well above the national average, with 98% of pupils meeting the expectations first time. The phonics leader monitors pupils' progress closely and intervenes swiftly to ensure that pupils are at the right stage of their phonics development. As a result, pupils are progressing well and are not being held back. Sessions we visited together confirmed this. As pupils' skills progress, teaching is adapted to focus on developing pupils' comprehension skills, particularly for the most able pupils. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their reading development.
- In mathematics, we discussed a hypothesis that progress slows down in key stage 1, linking to the first line of enquiry. Following the results in 2016, you deemed the mathematics curriculum was not fit for purpose. Consequently, your mathematics leader introduced a new curriculum that engages pupils in more reasoning and problem-solving opportunities, which are vital skills. The positive impact of this was seen during the sessions we visited together and the books we looked at. However, in some lessons we agreed that the activities for the most able pupils were not well matched and could have challenged pupils even further.
- The next line of enquiry focused on attendance. Historically, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been below the national average. This was partly because it was deemed acceptable, in the past, to take pupils out of school for holidays during term time.
- Due to your relentless drive to improve attendance, pupils' attendance is now in line with the national average. Leaders promote the value of good attendance well. They have worked closely with parents and outside agencies to support improvements. One parent reported that, 'Being able to attend special breakfast with my child for their good attendance makes my day.'
- The effective action taken to actively promote the value of good attendance has ensured that the differences between groups of pupils have now been

diminished. However, a small proportion of parents still believe that it is acceptable to take significant periods of unauthorised absence for holidays during term time.

- My final line of enquiry focused on ensuring that pupils are kept safe and are free from bullying. This is because concerns were raised with Ofsted about this aspect of the school's work. Also, Parent View does not reflect a positive picture of the school. A number of parents have concerns, most notably about pupils' behaviour and bullying. However, inspection evidence did not confirm this. Pupils' attitudes to learning were exemplary throughout the school. Observations at break and lunchtimes also confirmed pupils' positive behaviour towards each other. Pupils are exceptionally well-mannered and polite and are a real credit to Warberry CofE Academy.
- Owing to the negative commentary on Parent View, I met with several groups of parents from across the school during the inspection. Their views aligned with my inspection findings. These parents were not aware of any concerns and were disappointed to be discussing bullying, which they were adamant does not exist. However, parents recognised the very complex social and emotional needs of a small proportion of pupils. You and your team have worked tirelessly to address these issues and improve personal support for these pupils. Inspection evidence shows that the school is calm and pupils are well supported for learning.
- All pupils who spoke to me were very positive about the school. Pupils did not agree with the more negative parental perceptions about bullying. They said that any issues are dealt with swiftly by school staff and are very few and far between.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recent work to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics continues so that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable, particularly the most able
- the headteacher, senior leaders and staff continue to work with parents to improve relationships, especially when parents have concerns about behaviour and bullying
- leaders continue their rigorous work to reduce unauthorised holidays taken during term time.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Learning Academy Partnership Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Exeter, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Torbay. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Middlemore  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and your senior leadership team. I also met with two members of the governing body and had a telephone conversation with the chief executive officer of the trust. I met with several groups of parents and had informal discussions to seek their views. I met with teachers and teaching assistants to review safeguarding practice.

I visited several classes in the school and was accompanied by you during this tour. I scrutinised examples of pupils' work and observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and breaktimes and as they moved around school. I reviewed a number of documents, including documentation relating to safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, assessment information, behaviour logs and attendance records. I also took account of 89 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 53 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.