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Mrs Karen Butler
Fountains Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mrs Butler

Short inspection of Fountains Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 January 2016, 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 September 2010.

This school continues to be good.

The foresight of governors in pursuing the federation with Grewelthorpe Church of England Primary School, and in securing your proven strong leadership, means Fountains Primary School is well placed to continue to improve. You have cast a fresh light on practice and provision. Parents and staff are extremely positive about the improvements you are making to this good school. The successful partnership arrangements have invigorated the whole school community and are enabling the sharing of expertise and resources to the benefit of both schools.

Since your appointment in September 2015, you have hit the ground running, carrying out regular checks on the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' progress. This has enabled you to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses and to establish improvement priorities with the governing body. The actions you have already taken are sharpening the practice of leaders and teachers and therefore increasing the scope for further improvement.

Christian values are actively promoted by governors, leaders and teachers in a way that contributes to the good personal and social development of pupils. Pupils manage their behaviour well as they work and play together, so adults rarely need to correct them. Pupils are largely self-confident learners who rise to challenges and are not afraid to make mistakes. Pupils make good progress from their starting points, so that by the time they leave school, many exceed expected levels of attainment and a few have reached the very highest levels in writing and mathematics.

At the last inspection, inspectors identified two areas for improvement. The first was to improve the outdoor learning activities for reception children. The physical environment has been improved and the recently qualified early years teacher is making increasingly effective use of this space. The second area for improvement was to extend pupils' understanding of multicultural diversity within Great Britain. Early actions to improve this aspect of pupils' learning have not been sustained over time. However, you have picked this up quickly through the involvement of pupil ambassadors in the British values initiative of the local cluster of schools in order to kick-start this work.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are secure. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to stay safe. Incidents of bullying are rare and the vast majority of pupils and parents agree that where it does occur it is dealt with effectively. Adults understand what to do if they have concerns about the welfare of individual pupils or about the behaviour of adults towards pupils. Leaders carry out thorough checks on the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. Governors make visits to check the premises and grounds, which are safe and secure. Risk assessments are rigorous, accidents are recorded and regular fire drills are conducted.

Inspection findings

The governing bodies of Fountains and Grewelthorpe Church of England Primary Schools formed a hard federation of the two schools under a single governing body and your experienced leadership from 1 September 2015. This has energised the school community while increasing the capacity of both schools to improve further.

Determined, aspirational leaders and governors are driving improvement. Senior leaders provide detailed information about the achievement of pupils, enabling governors to challenge leaders to close any gaps in outcomes which emerge between groups of pupils.

Over the last year, middle leaders have become more involved in checking the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. Since September, under your direction, this involvement has increased, as you coach and train leaders. As a result, leaders' understanding of their role and what they should look out for has been enhanced, and expectations of teachers and pupils are clear. You and other leaders identify and share any small areas for development in each teacher's practice, resulting in improvement. Teachers benefit from sharing each other's expertise and that of their colleagues in the partner school.

Teachers generally make effective use of assessment to pitch activities for pupils at the right level. Consequently, pupils receive a good degree of challenge. For example, in a visit to Key Stage 1, the teacher provided an open-ended mathematics challenge which deepened pupils' thinking as they grappled with different ways of

representing halves of numbers, helping them to get to grips with equivalent fractions. The teacher asked effective questions, providing opportunities for pupils to reason and explain their thinking.

Teachers check pupils' learning during lessons to make sure it is not too hard or too easy, to address misconceptions and to provide helpful feedback which pupils act upon. In an upper Key Stage 2 literacy lesson, pupils enjoyed thinking for themselves about how to write a poem based on their learning about the classic poem *The Highwayman*. The teacher circulated among the pupils, giving them pointers and reminders and helping them to draw on their existing good knowledge about literary devices.

Pupils' progress continues to be good. The proportions of pupils making and exceeding expected progress is similar to national figures and the proportions of pupils working above age-related expectations are in line with and increasingly above national figures. You have introduced an effective new assessment system which clearly identifies any pupils who may be underperforming. Where there are chinks in the progress of small groups of pupils in some year groups, prompt action is taken to ensure that they catch up.

Teachers involve parents well in their children's learning. In the early years, each child has a home workbook in which the teacher records what the child has been learning along with the next steps. This enables parents to help children practise their skills at home, contributing to their progress. An increasing number of parents of pupils in all year groups are reading with their children at home because of a recent initiative to generate greater enjoyment of reading, and to increase the amount of time that pupils spend on reading.

Some aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning are good. Pupils demonstrate respect for each other in this inclusive school, as shown, for example, in how they fully involve those classmates who have disabilities. A mock general election last May, and the workings of the school council, enhance pupils' understanding about democracy and how they can influence change. Pupils' knowledge about other cultural traditions, however, is limited.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the curriculum actively prepares pupils for life in modern Britain, by providing a wider variety of resources and opportunities to learn about other cultures, faiths and beliefs.

Yours sincerely

Philip Riozzi
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I discussed aspects of the school's work with you, your assistant headteacher and the English and science leaders. I also held meetings with three members of the governing body and a local authority adviser. I met with a few parents and considered the responses of 35 parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View). We both visited all classrooms together to observe teaching. I examined samples of pupils' work and listened to what pupils had to say about their learning and what it is like to be a child in the school, as well as observing them during break- and lunchtimes. I scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation document, the school development plan, local authority notes of visits and notes of governing body meetings. I also examined information about pupils' achievement.