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Duggie Speight
Headteacher
Carleton Endowed Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Carleton
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Dear Mr Speight

Short inspection of Carleton Endowed Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 February 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 May 2012.

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 worked very effectively to establish and maintain a culture at the school where kindness and respect, high expectations and high-quality learning are practised and celebrated. Your school is characterised by the happiness and eagerness with which pupils and staff engage with each other and their learning.

Pupils enjoy coming to Carleton. As one parent said to me, 'They run here in the morning and walk home at the end of the day.' Your pupils enjoy a challenging and enthralling curriculum. This 'formal' curriculum is very effectively supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, trips and residential opportunities. Your staff are very skilled and parents appreciate the care and attention to detail they show through their teaching and communications with home.

Your previous inspection in May 2012 identified that more sharing of staff expertise across the school would improve teaching even further. Over the intervening years you have worked effectively to address this through a range of strategies. Your expert management of the performance of your whole team, both teachers and teaching assistants, is one of these. Through performance management, you agree and monitor very specific targets with each member of staff that focus very closely on improving and extending the staff's expertise in teaching. This has had a significantly positive impact on the quality of teaching across the school.

Handwriting and accurate spelling were also identified in the previous inspection as areas that needed further development. Again, you have worked effectively to address these. A whole-school approach to handwriting, using a cursive script, is now embedded and pupils take pride in their work. There is a whole-school, successful approach to the teaching of spelling. However, you and your team still recognise that there is more to do to further improve, extend and deepen pupils' writing by giving them more opportunities to write at greater depth and length in a wider range of subjects beyond English.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality.

You, your staff and the governing body take your safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. There is a culture of safeguarding at the school. There is regular and effective training for all staff and governors to ensure that they are up to date in their knowledge and understanding.

You, as designated safeguarding lead, have strong links with outside agencies. Your records of engagement with these agencies are detailed and show your meticulous approach to this aspect of the school's work. You engage with the local authority promptly and follow safeguarding issues through effectively.

Inspection findings

- I looked at the effectiveness of the early years provision as one of the lines of enquiry for this inspection to see whether children got off to a flying start at school.
- Children settle quickly into the Reception class because of the meticulous transition arrangements put in place by the early years leader and her team. There are close links with nursery providers and staff in the early years have a clear understanding of the range of children's needs as they enter the school. This means that staff already know a lot about the children before they arrive. As a result, plans for each child's learning are well developed. In addition, the school runs regular information events for parents before and after their children enter the Reception Year. These events help to ensure that parents are kept informed and underline the importance of open, regular and confident communication between school and home.
- Children are happy and safe and soon grow to understand and welcome the routines established by the school. The environment is bright and engaging, both inside and out. Children play and learn well together, developing their skills as enquiring and collaborative learners.
- The early years leader deploys her staff carefully. Children's progress is monitored and recorded carefully and used to focus the next steps in learning. Teaching assistants are skilled and well trained. They play a key role in this

monitoring aspect of the early years work.

- The way leaders have grouped the children across the five classes in the school means that there are opportunities, for example, for the most able Reception children in Class 1 to work with pupils in Class 2. This provides opportunities to 'stretch' the most able pupils by putting them alongside pupils undertaking more challenging work in another class.
- I also looked at how well the school encourages and further extends pupils' skills as writers. The school is effective in the way it targets support so that all pupils make good progress with their writing. This is because you monitor pupils' progress regularly and carefully and then, where necessary, if they are falling behind for example, use focused interventions to get pupils back on track.
- Staff use a range of effective and imaginative strategies to introduce technical vocabulary and extend pupils' facility with and love of written language. For example, in a key stage 2 class, the teacher deftly used the rules of haiku to teach pupils about syllables. Pupils enjoyed the ways that the distinctive and, at first apparently restrictive, 'rules' of haiku made them think and explore language and its impact.
- You also give opportunities for pupils to write at greater length so that they can develop their ideas and extend their thoughts. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are rising to the challenge of writing more and, as a result, developing and deepening their skills and ideas. This means that all pupils, including the most able, have a growing awareness of themselves as writers who can use language to persuade, evaluate, describe and influence. So far, much of the strategy you have introduced to enhance pupils' writing skills is focused on topics traditionally associated with English. There is less evidence of broadening their experience of writing in other areas of the curriculum, such as geography and history, in order that they understand and practise the distinctive features of writing as a historian or geographer. You have assured me that you plan to tackle this issue.
- The recently introduced 'Expedition' approach to learning involves a whole-school journey through a particular topic, such as the second world war. The exploration of the topic involves a wide range of approaches and experiences to stimulate thought and writing, including trips (in this case to Eden Camp), research and artwork. This approach has had a very positive impact on the depth, accuracy and extent of writing across the school. Pupils talked with real enthusiasm about what they had written and how they chose a particular approach and style of writing to suit a particular reader or purpose.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is even more urgency in the pace of learning throughout the school, but most particularly in the early years and at the start of key stage 1
- pupils have more opportunities to develop appropriate skills in writing in subjects such as history and geography.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Evans
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I visited all classes, most of them accompanied by you, to observe teaching, learning and assessment. During these visits, where appropriate, I spoke with teachers and teaching assistants about their work. I also checked pupils' progress in their books, talked formally with a group of pupils from key stage 2 and talked informally with pupils in lessons and around the school at lunchtime and playtime.

I met with groups of parents at the beginning and end of the day. I met with you to discuss the school's effectiveness and what you have done to ensure that the school continues to improve. I also met with the early years leader, four governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, and with you as the coordinator of the school's work to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

I spoke with an officer from North Yorkshire local authority on the telephone about the authority's view of the school and your successful work in supporting other schools in the area.

I read a range of documents, including your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I also scrutinised the school's safeguarding systems, records and associated documents. I checked information about pupils' achievement, along with external evaluations of aspects of the school's work, including one undertaken by an officer from the Diocese of Leeds education team. I also read minutes of meetings of the governing body.

I considered 54 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), 42 free text comments and four letters from parents, 22 responses from staff and 77 responses from pupils to the online questionnaires.

I attended an act of collective worship taken by pupil members of the worship committee at the start of the day.