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Dr Lynn Bartram
Headteacher
Pocklington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School
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Dear Dr Bartram

Short inspection of Pocklington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 24 October 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 October 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 began your post as headteacher in September 2017 and immediately set to work on establishing the school's strengths and weaknesses. You have acted with haste to identify and begin to address the main priorities. You astutely recognise that although pupils' outcomes are positive, there are several aspects of the school's work which could be developed further. Already you have set in motion a range of effective systems and procedures to ensure that the school continues to improve. Change has been managed very successfully and staff are on board and share your high expectations for pupils' outcomes. They feel well supported to improve the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning.

After a dip in pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 in 2016, leaders took action to ensure that by 2017, outcomes had improved. Provisional assessment information shows that attainment at the expected standard by the end of key stage 1 improved from being below the national average in 2016 to above it in reading, writing and mathematics by 2017. Attainment of greater depth continued to be above average in writing and mathematics and was in line with national figures for reading. You have been quick to identify that the teaching of phonics and reading could be further improved. You are also keen to increase the impact of middle leaders in raising standards in their areas of responsibility.

Leaders are able to demonstrate how some of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been met, for example raising attainment in mathematics. However, you recognise that some aspects of the areas for development have not been fully achieved. Boys' outcomes in writing still remain much lower than those for boys nationally, whereas by the end of Year 2, boys are almost catching up with their peers nationally in reading and mathematics. You are aware that boys, in both English and mathematics, need to catch up more quickly from their often low starting points on entry to Reception. You are therefore keen to improve the quality of teaching even further so that a greater proportion of boys meet and exceed the expectations by the end of each key stage.

Parents appreciate how approachable and responsive the staff team is. They feel well informed about their child's learning and how they are being effectively supported to make good progress. The curriculum provides a rich range of experiences and opportunities which capture pupils' interest and spark their enthusiasm. There is a strong sense of community within the school, which is built on strong relationships between staff, pupils and parents.

Safeguarding is effective.

A culture of safeguarding is clearly present across the school. This is because leaders and governors take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. Leaders and governors make sure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Regular meetings between the governor responsible for safeguarding and senior leaders ensure that procedures are checked carefully. Staff receive regular training, which makes sure that they have the knowledge and skills to respond to any issues which may arise.

Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after and parents agree. They are confident that any rare issues of poor behaviour are dealt with firmly and fairly by the staff.

Inspection findings

- Governors are passionate about the school and have ensured that the school has a strong capacity for further improvement. They check the accuracy of information they receive and ensure that assessments are moderated and that external views are considered. Additional confirmation comes from their regular visits to school. Therefore, governors are very knowledgeable about the school and have a range of skills which they use to provide effective challenge and support for school leaders. For example, governors were rigorous in their challenge about pupils' disappointing attainment in 2016. Consequently, this led to a thorough exploration of the reasons for these outcomes and a plan of action to address the issues. Outcomes improved in 2017 as a result of leaders' and governors' diligent actions.
- You are keen to continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning and speed up pupils' progress. A new, rigorous performance management system is effective in holding teachers and leaders to account for pupils' outcomes. You

have introduced a new approach to the use of assessment information. Teachers are now raising their own questions about what the information suggests. This is allowing teachers to reflect on the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning. Pupil progress meetings and increased knowledge of assessment information are making sure that teachers are able to plan work which more precisely meets the needs of individuals and groups and provides sufficient challenge.

- You and the governors are also aware that middle leadership is underdeveloped. Middle leaders have not contributed sufficiently to the self-evaluation and school improvement planning process, for example, about the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils. There is a need to bolster middle leadership roles so that leaders are able to take greater responsibility for improving teaching and learning and raising standards in their areas of responsibility.
- Over the last few years, more children begin Reception at a stage of development which is lower than that seen typically for their age. Boys in particular often have the lowest starting points on entry to Reception. Despite making strong progress, not enough boys catch up with their peers and reach a good level of development by the end of early years. This means that too many are unprepared for the key stage 1 curriculum. Girls, however, make better progress than boys so that by end of Reception in 2017, 93% had reached a good level of development, compared with 52% of boys. Leaders are fully aware of the need for boys to make accelerated progress so that they catch up more quickly with their peers nationally.
- Staff make sure that reading is well promoted through author spotlights and regular reading opportunities at home and school. Consequently, pupils enjoy reading and usually make good use of their phonics strategies to support them in reading unfamiliar words. The proportion of pupils able to read at the expected standard improved in 2017 and was above the national average. Attainment of greater depth was in line with national figures. Leaders have identified that pupils need to develop more detailed responses to their reading in order for even more pupils to demonstrate a more developed understanding of what they have read.
- The proportion of pupils who met the standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2017 dipped to just below the national average. By the end of Year 2, however, the proportion who meet the standard is consistently strong. In 2017, 100% of pupils met the standard. Boys catch up with their understanding of phonics from their lower starting points at the end of early years. However, you have been quick to recognise that greater consistency in the teaching of phonics would enable an even greater proportion of pupils to reach the standard by the end of Year 1.
- Attendance overall has been above the national average in recent years. However, for disadvantaged pupils, attendance has been below the national average. Additionally, far more boys than girls are persistently absent. Leaders accept that there is more to do in checking the impact of strategies for improving the attendance of pupil groups.
- At present, the school does not meet the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. While the website is being improved, leaders are not able to update it with the expected information.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of phonics is more consistent
- middle leaders take greater responsibility for improving pupils' outcomes in their areas of responsibility
- boys' progress is accelerated so that a greater proportion reach a good level of development by the end of Reception and the expected standard and beyond by the end of Year 2
- there is an improvement in attendance for boys and disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Godfrey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the assistant headteacher, the early years leader and the mathematics leader. I also met with three members of the governing body. I evaluated documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance records, and information about safeguarding. I spoke with several parents at the start of the school day and considered the 97 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I met with a group of pupils from a range of year groups and spoke with a group of teaching staff. You and I visited every classroom together to observe teaching and learning, listen to pupils read and scrutinise pupils' work in their books.