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Mrs Rachel Murray
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Dear Mrs Murray

Short inspection of St Barnabas CofE Primary School, Barnetby

Following my visit to the school on 28 November 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are passionate in your dedication to understanding and addressing the needs of each pupil. You have built a culture of respect and friendship that seeps through adults and pupils in the school. Your strong leadership is recognised and warmly commented on by the school community and beyond. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about how staff 'go the extra mile' to make sure that their children are safe and well cared for. They value the school's focus on instilling deep moral values that will help their children throughout their lives. Leaders' work to strengthen pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is strong. Pupils and parents comment positively on the school's before- and after-school clubs. Parents feel that this provision is 'the icing on the cake' of the school's friendly, happy and safe approach to their children's welfare. Strong partnerships between school leaders, governors, the local authority and the diocese support the improvements being made.

At the last inspection, you were tasked with ensuring that teaching across the school is consistently good, making sure that pupils are involved in lessons and sharing ideas. During this inspection, pupils were eager to talk about their learning. Lessons give many opportunities for pupils to collaborate and share their opinions. Pupils said that they are used to explaining their ideas and decisions to others, and that this helps them to improve their own work. Whole-staff training on specific school priorities has resulted in the consistent and effective implementation of new strategies. For example, teachers and teaching assistants model accurate sounding

and application of phonics. They use effective questioning to support pupils in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding in reading. However, sometimes teachers' checks on pupils' learning, and the resulting assessments that are recorded in the school assessment system, are not accurately matched against the age-related expectations.

The second area for improvement identified at the last inspection was to make sure that staff with additional responsibilities rigorously check the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make, to ensure that they can clearly identify what needs to be improved. Senior and middle leaders are confident in their roles, and have a good knowledge of the areas they lead. They know exactly which areas are strengths and which areas most need improvement. They make careful decisions, with pupils and their needs very much at the heart of the actions taken. For example, the deputy headteacher provides effective information to governors and parents about how well the school is supporting disadvantaged pupils. Although there is an honest and accurate view that some gaps remain between the academic achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others nationally, there is a clear package of support in place to address the emotional, social and medical needs of these pupils, as well as their academic needs.

Leaders acknowledge that they are not as confident in the new system they have put in place to address the national changes in the curriculum and the related assessments. They have changed the assessment system to provide more accurate information. Thus, the current system is still very new, and leaders are still refining and developing it. Leaders agree that while they can check the progress of all pupils at the end of the year, checking the progress of groups and classes throughout the year is more difficult. They also acknowledge that the school assessment information does not always accurately reflect the progress and improvement that can be seen in the pupils' work.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to ensuring that there is an open and proactive culture of safeguarding. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Close attention is given to ensuring that all staff and governors have training that is up to date and thorough. As well as annual training in aspects of safeguarding for everyone, various members of staff attend specific training to support particular issues in school and to address different pupils' needs. Staff know what to do if they have concerns, and clear procedures are in place to record and check these concerns. Resulting actions to be taken are clearly identified and well followed up.

Procedures for the recruitment of new staff are well organised. Leaders, including the school business manager, use the local authority systems, policies and support well to ensure that this work is thorough.

Leaders are relentless in their efforts to establish links with a wide variety of agencies to ensure that their children, and their families, are supported as well as

they possibly can be.

Leaders' commitment to keeping pupils safe, and teaching them how to keep themselves safe, is well articulated by the pupils themselves. Pupils confidently explained the wide range of safety activities and learning they take part in, including cycle safety, road safety, all rules in school (which pupils explain are there simply to keep them safe and happy) and fire safety. Very fresh in pupils' minds was the first aid course they had completed, and how the skills they had learned could help them in the future.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I wanted to find out how well leaders are addressing the lower performance of pupils in reading. The answer from leaders was, 'with gusto!' Leaders have left no stone unturned in their research and evaluations of strategies, activities and teaching that will improve pupils' outcomes in reading. Leaders have carefully checked that any new direction in reading is right for the needs of their pupils. They have taken as much advice as they can, from the local authority and other schools, and have responded rapidly to the disappointing recent results. Work has included pupils sharing books with football players in the Scunthorpe Reading Stars initiative. Pupils have responded well to incentives such as the reading reward vouchers to spend at the school book fair. A course led by the local authority to train teaching assistants in supporting reading has resulted in pupils being given more effective support in class. Teaching assistants run an after-school reading club that pupils particularly enjoy. Pupils are encouraged to share books and practise their reading skills together. Informal activities and drop-ins, such as the visit from the caretaker to read to the pupils, make this a relaxing, enjoyable and productive end to the day. Leaders know that this work needs to remain as a priority to ensure stronger pupils' outcomes in reading throughout the school.
- The support led by the headteacher and the lead teacher for vulnerable pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and their families is strong. There is a good understanding of pupils' needs and a relentless determination from leaders to ensure that children get the support, in school and beyond, that they need. The lead teacher has adapted the school assessment systems to make sure that there is a clear analysis and good understanding of the children's starting points. She is clear about where they have made stronger or weaker progress over their time in school and the reasons for this. Support is well directed to these pupils. Teaching assistants provide strong support because of the effective training they have received and the shared understanding of the next steps that each pupil needs to take.
- I was interested to see how well leaders and teachers are supporting groups of pupils who did not perform as strongly as others nationally, in terms of age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics, at the end of a key stage 1. Leaders have a very clear understanding about why some pupils did not perform as well. They are clear about the support that these pupils have received in the past to try to help them catch up and about how this has been adapted this year. Leaders have given careful consideration to staffing, additional support

and the activities that pupils are taking part in to support them in making more rapid progress. Pupils' current work shows that adults' clear guidance and direction are starting to have an effect on helping pupils to feel successful and improve the progress they are making from their lower starting points. However, teachers' recorded assessments of pupils' attainment against the national expectations are not always accurate.

- Governors are very positive about the work of the school and are proud of their roles. They are dedicated to looking at ways in which they can improve their work. For example, they have reorganised the structure of how they gather information and support and challenge different aspects of school leaders' work. They evaluate their own skills and are mindful of adding to these when they recruit new governors. They have a clear understanding of their accountable role, for example, in checking that leaders have put effective safeguarding procedures and practices in place, and in checking how well additional funding is supporting disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. They receive regular informative and celebratory information from the headteacher. The end-of-year and end-of-key-stage information about pupils' attainment and progress is well understood by governors, who ask challenging questions when pupils' outcomes are less strong than the national averages. However, the information recorded about the progress that particular groups and classes are making throughout the year is less precise, so governors are not as clear about whether those pupils who are behind are catching up quickly enough.
- Leaders are being successfully supported in school improvement by the diocese and the local authority. The local authority school improvement partner understands the school's strengths and is helping to support areas that need improvement. Joint checks on teaching and learning have taken place with school leaders. These have led to the brokering of support to improve reading, including working with other schools and a specialist adviser directing different training and support. Leaders and staff also commented favourably on the strong support that the local authority gives in terms of safeguarding, such as the checks on staff and carrying out effective risk assessments and governors' training.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the effective and thorough work that has started to improve pupils' outcomes in reading continues
- teachers are confident in making accurate judgements about pupils' attainment in relation to the national age-related expectations
- the school assessment information provides timely information for leaders, including governors, about the progress that different groups and cohorts are making, to ensure that any underperformance is quickly identified and rigorously addressed.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Lincoln, the regional schools commissioner and the director of

children's services for North Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kate Rowley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I looked at specific aspects of the school's work, including leadership, the quality of teaching and learning and safeguarding arrangements. You and I worked closely together observing teaching and learning, looking at pupils' work and discussing the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. I met with senior and middle leaders, staff and pupils, as well as representatives from the governing body and the local authority. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, the quality of teaching and learning and external reviews of the school. I spoke to parents before school. I considered their comments and the 46 responses to Ofsted's Parent View, as well as school questionnaires.