

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Miss Louise Jones  
Executive headteacher  
Deepcar St John's Church of England Junior School  
St Margaret Avenue  
Deepcar  
Sheffield  
South Yorkshire  
S36 2TE

Dear Miss Jones

### **Short inspection of Deepcar St John's Church of England Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 May 2019, 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 2015

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since taking up the post of executive headteacher in September 2018, you have introduced a number of changes that are already having a very positive impact. Your evaluation of the school is accurate, and you have well thought-out plans to develop the school further. These plans give governors clear milestones to judge progress so that they can hold you and your team to account for the school's continued development.

You have been able to have this rapid impact as your appointment as executive headteacher, along with your role as headteacher of Royd Nursery Infant School, was part of a longer transition process, supported by the local authority and the diocese, of bringing two neighbouring schools into a closer relationship. It is very important that this work is now completed speedily so that the improvements you are making are secured. All parties recognise that there is much to be gained to improve the education of children and pupils through the work that you have already started in bringing the two schools together.

Parents and carers are positive about Deepcar St John's, as I found when I spoke to them and through my examination of Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. They identified good communication and the extra-curricular opportunities you provide as real strengths. One parent said, 'This is a wonderful school, where my child has been extremely happy, contented and well educated.' Staff who responded to the

survey all say that they are proud to work at the school and that it is improving. Staff I spoke to fully support the changes you are making and appreciate the training they are receiving. It was a pleasure to meet the pupils. They were very eager to tell me about their school and the pupil survey results also show that they are positive about their education. This is reflected in their behaviour, which is good both in lessons and at social times. In lessons, teachers are able to plan a range of activities because pupils eagerly follow instructions and cooperate with their peers. At break and lunchtime, they play with their friends and enjoy the activities that are provided by the sports coach.

The last inspection identified the need to enable more pupils to make rapid progress, particularly in mathematics. Outcomes for pupils were disappointing in 2016 but since then there has been a sustained trend of improvement in reading, writing and mathematics, with results in reading being very strong. You identify the need for more pupils to achieve greater depth in their writing and mathematics. The work I saw shows that the actions you have taken are having a positive impact on this. I saw examples of challenging work in mathematics and extended writing in English. However, you and your team are clear that more needs to be done to ensure that this improvement is sustained. You recognise the key role played by subject leaders. The leaders in mathematics and English feel that you have empowered them to lead. You have ensured that these leaders receive appropriate, focused support and training to develop their skills and expertise in leading their areas of the school.

There has also been extensive training to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) for both teachers and teaching assistants. The needs of pupils with SEND are well catered for and this was noted by parents who responded to the online survey. They make good progress from their starting points because of the support that they receive, as was seen in last year's key stage 2 tests.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your team have created a culture where pupils feel safe and every care is taken to keep them so. The designated safeguarding leader and her deputy not only have the knowledge that is required, they also have the passion and commitment to ensure that they explore all opportunities to support pupils as the need arises. Staff at all levels are aware of their responsibilities to safeguard pupils. They receive regular training. Records are thorough and meticulously kept, including those on the recruitment of staff.

Pupils report that bullying is very rare. This is confirmed by your records. Pupils know that they can talk to staff if they have a problem and they are confident that staff would sort it out. There is an effective programme of activities including assemblies and lessons to teach them how to stay safe, including for instance, when they are online. The older pupils I met spoke very positively about the teaching they had received on this and other aspects of personal development and wider British

values. They spoke with a great deal of maturity about who how people from different backgrounds should be treated equally and that this is what happens at their school.

You responded promptly and effectively to a decline in attendance last year. The actions you put in place have seen attendance levels for this year improving to above national averages. This has been a team effort, with better analysis of information and more timely, focused interventions. Pupils are overwhelmingly positive and are proud to be a part of this inclusive, happy school community with its Christian ethos. They enjoy coming to school.

## **Inspection findings**

- Pupils take real care with their work. Exercise books are well kept. A great deal of pupils' work is displayed both in classrooms and around the school, which creates a stimulating learning environment.
- In mathematics, a new curriculum has been developed over the last two years. This is designed to ensure that pupils move on to work that gives them the right level of challenge so that they fully master mathematical operations. Work in books shows that most pupils are making progress. However, too few of the harder tasks require pupils to develop their skills of reasoning and problem-solving, so that they can apply their mathematical knowledge in different situations.
- In English, current pupils' reading comprehension is good. This was also the case in last year's end-of-key-stage tests, where more pupils achieved the higher standard than in most schools. Listening to pupils read during the inspection indicates that these high standards are being maintained. You and your team have identified that you need to expose pupils to a greater range of high-quality texts so that they can extend their vocabulary and learn to manipulate language in more complex ways, to develop their writing. Middle leaders could identify that this is now happening in the books we looked at. However, they are clear that there is still more to be done to secure and deepen these improvements.
- You have introduced a new approach to the management of the extra resources that the school receives for pupils who are disadvantaged. Your plans identify barriers to pupils' learning effectively, including the social and emotional needs of some pupils. You are now using these resources more effectively and this means that more disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in both English and mathematics.
- You have introduced new systems of tracking pupils' progress. Staff are positive about these and are confident that pupils are making better progress, particularly those who are aiming to achieve at the higher standard, because assessment is more accurate and timely.
- You offer a wide-ranging curriculum. I observed Year 4 learning French and music. In French, they were learning the months of the year using songs and games, while in music they were learning about notation before playing the recorder. In both sessions, pupils engaged fully with the activities. In a Year 3 PE

lesson, pupils were completing a unit on gymnastics with a lesson on agility, which they were enjoying. Year 6 were working on design and technology, making a model automaton out of balsa wood. This was a project inspired by the book they are reading. Pupils talked enthusiastically about their work. However, the coverage of some subjects needs to be improved. Pupils in Year 6 identified that they had spent little time on geography.

- There was interesting and stimulating work in books in science and history, but it is not always of the same high quality as in English and mathematics. At present, questioning pupils shows that they are not retaining the knowledge in these subjects and are therefore not making such good progress. You have already responded to this with new initiatives, but there is more to do in this area.
- There is an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities that complement the more formal curriculum. Both pupils and parents identified this as a strength of the school. The pupils I spoke to were particularly positive about sport, identifying football, basketball, cricket and cheerleading. There are also opportunities for pupils to experience and take part in the arts, including performance, music and visual arts. There is an extensive programme of visits. Year 6 pupils were looking forward to their residential trip to London.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the leadership and governance of the school is fully secured by the speedy completion of the process of partnership between the school and Royd Nursery Infant School that has been initiated and supported by governors, the local authority and the diocese
- they continue to develop the strategies to improve pupils' progress in writing and mathematics so that more pupils achieve at greater depth
- they continue to develop the curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics, particularly in science, history and geography so that pupils retain more of the knowledge that they are taught.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Cummings  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and other leaders to evaluate the strengths and areas for development across the school. We also discussed the actions taken to improve mathematics and leadership in the school since the previous inspection. Together, we visited all classes in the school. I discussed these observations with you and I reviewed a wide range of work in pupils' books, particularly in mathematics, English, science, history and geography. I spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, about their learning and experiences of school. I listened to a group of pupils read. I read and scrutinised a wide range of school documentation, including the school self-evaluation document and the school's improvement plan. I spoke to the chair of governors and to representatives of the local authority and the diocese. I also scrutinised documents relating to behaviour, safeguarding and child protection. I spoke to parents and staff. I considered the 14 responses to Ofsted's staff survey, the 17 responses to Parent View as well as 42 responses to the pupil survey.