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9 July 2019

Mr Magnus Smedley
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Smedley

Short inspection of St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 2 July 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in July 2016.

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 your post in January 2017, you have been effective in identifying priorities and securing improvements. With the support of other leaders, you have strengthened teaching and pupils' outcomes in a number of areas. These include improvements in phonics, reading and mathematics. You have also ensured that most pupils attend school regularly.

You are determined that pupils will have the best possible education, and this passion is reflected throughout your highly motivated staff team. You are clear in your aim to prepare pupils for the future. To this end, you prioritise developing their communication skills, as well as fostering their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, pupils are sociable, articulate and respectful. Their knowledge of faiths, cultures and diversity ensures that they are tolerant of difference. Your emphasis, throughout your work, is on the Christian values of peace, hope and joy. This creates in the school an ethos rooted in caring for one another.

You have engaged effectively with partner schools, consultants and improvement officers from the trust. With their support, you provide tailored professional development for staff. Staff feel valued because of this. They are well equipped to teach effectively and to contribute to school improvement through leading subjects.

Governors share your commitment to continuously improving the school's effectiveness. Along with trustees, they understand the school's priorities and hold

leaders to account stringently for their performance.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have secured an effective culture of safeguarding in the school, ensuring that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are knowledgeable about the potential risk pupils may face and the possible indicators of harm. Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities in keeping children safe. Staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding communicate appropriately with external agencies. They are tenacious advocates for vulnerable pupils, following up referrals where necessary. Child protection records are detailed and well maintained.

Appropriate checks are in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Records in respect of these are organised. The trust uses the reports from audits carried out by external parties to ensure that the safeguarding culture is maintained consistently.

Inspection findings

- With the support of the deputy headteacher, you have prioritised pupils' reading development. You have placed reading at the heart of all learning across curriculum subjects. You recognised that previously, pupils' learning in a range of areas was limited by their reading skills. Reading now underpins the curriculum, with high-quality texts used as the vehicle to link different subjects together. Books and texts are carefully selected to appeal to pupils, to cover pertinent issues, such as equalities, and to expose pupils to a wealth of ambitious vocabulary. For example, Year 5 pupils are reading the novel, 'Journey to Jo'burg', which is supporting their learning about apartheid in South Africa. This approach to the curriculum has ensured that pupils read widely. As a result, they are keen readers who are developing their book and author preferences.
- You have ensured that teaching staff are equipped with secure subject knowledge in reading. Teachers typically design appropriately challenging activities to support pupils' reading comprehension skills and broaden their vocabulary. Teachers are skilled in modelling and explaining how to approach activities successfully. Pupils' work shows that they make good progress in developing skills, such as those required to infer characters' feelings. Pupils often give detailed accounts, using evidence from the book or text to justify their assertions. However, sometimes, pupils give underdeveloped answers to questions and are not given the opportunity to deepen their understanding of what they have read.
- Your coherent approach to teaching reading and fostering pupils' love of reading has secured vital improvements in pupils' outcomes. Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 improved from 2017 to 2018, to bring it in line with the national average. Key stage 1 attainment has also improved considerably year on year. Unvalidated data for 2019 shows Year 2 pupils making strong progress to ensure that their attainment is in line with the national average.
- You have ensured that phonics teaching is effective in developing pupils' early

reading skills. Teaching staff are adept at delivering sessions that give pupils a wealth of opportunities to hear and practise reading sounds and words. Lower-attaining pupils often benefit from practising in small groups with bespoke teaching. The books and resources pupils use to practise are well matched to their phonics knowledge. Consequently, almost all pupils read fluently by the end of key stage 1.

- You have clear expectations of the rate at which pupils will acquire phonics knowledge. You complement this with assessment systems that swiftly identify pupils who are not keeping up. These pupils are then selected for additional teaching. These systems, coupled with effective teaching, have ensured that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has increased considerably over the last three years. Unvalidated data for 2019 shows that 80% of Year 1 pupils reached the expected standard. Although this is just below average, considering pupils' starting points, they have made strong progress.
- You recognised that pupils' attainment in mathematics was below average at the end of each key stage in 2017 and 2018. Pupils' attainment in Year 2 was particularly low in 2018 and was in the lowest 10% of schools nationally. Together with the mathematics leader, you have been successful in securing necessary improvements to the quality of teaching. Teachers have benefited from individualised professional development, supported by a specialist consultant. As a result of this, teachers now sequence pupils' learning skilfully so that pupils build their skills and knowledge systematically. Pupils usually have frequent opportunities to reason mathematically and to apply their growing knowledge to problems and puzzles.
- Where support for teachers' professional development has been most intense, pupils' outcomes have seen the most significant improvement. Unvalidated data for key stage 1 in 2019 shows that the proportion of pupils working at the standard expected for their age improved considerably in comparison with 2018 data. Attainment is now just below average at the expected level. However, you identify, rightly, that across all year groups, too few pupils reach the higher standards of learning.
- Children in early years get off to a strong start in their learning, including in reading and mathematics. Many children enter Reception Year with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age. Adults are skilled in designing activities that are matched to children's needs. Children often develop multiple skills through one activity. For example, during the inspection, children choosing the water activity were developing their fine motor and communication skills, as well as their understanding of the capacity of different containers. Adults are adept at steering and extending children's learning. This effective teaching ensures that children sustain concentration, show high levels of independence and make good progress.
- Last academic year, you identified the sharp rise in pupils' absences. Following this, you reinforced thorough systems for addressing lateness and low or falling attendance. Along with pastoral staff, you provide valuable support for families, including places for pupils at breakfast club, which, in turn, have improved pupils'

attendance. As a result of your focused efforts in this area, attendance and punctuality have improved considerably for all groups of pupils. Pupils' attendance rates are now just below average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- mathematics teaching is improved further to enable more pupils to reach the higher standards of learning
- teachers have consistently high expectations that pupils will demonstrate a deep understanding of books and texts.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Lincoln, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North East Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Karine Hendley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, leaders for reading and mathematics, and a group of governors. I met with a group of 13 members of staff and spoke to the deputy chief executive officer of the trust, who was also representing the diocese. I considered the 14 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. I observed teaching and learning with you in all classes apart from Year 2, as this class was on an educational visit. I listened to pupils read and scrutinised their work alongside the reading and mathematics leaders. I spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, and observed their behaviour around the school, including at playtime, lunchtime and at breakfast club. I reviewed school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation of its overall effectiveness and improvement plans, as well as information about pupils' progress, attainment, behaviour and attendance. I met with parents at the start of the day and took account of the two free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.