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Mrs Patricia Ruff
Headteacher
Dunholme St Chad's Church of England Primary School
Ryland Road
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Dear Mrs Ruff

Short inspection of Dunholme St Chad's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 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 December 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 are keen to ensure that pupils feel safe and happy in their school. Much time and attention is taken so that the curriculum promotes pupils' skills, interests, knowledge and understanding. You said that you are determined that pupils gain the abilities needed to be well-prepared, confident, independent learners.

Parents are overwhelming in their praise of the school. Many of the 30 parents who responded to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire were keen to inform the inspector of the care, guidance and support they and their children had received. All said that staff were approachable and would always go 'the extra mile' to help. One parent spoke for many when commenting, 'I really cannot thank the school enough for everything they have put in place for my child – thank you Dunholme St Chad's!'

Much care has been taken to ensure that pupils learn in an exciting environment. No opportunity is missed to help pupils to learn. Displays are imaginative and every effort is made to excite pupils' interests and to reward their efforts. Pupils respect their school; they know routines well and move around in a calm and respectful manner. At the start of the school day, pupils are welcomed with smiles and words of encouragement. Quickly, they settle to their learning.

You have responded well to the findings from the previous inspection. The school has high-quality senior and middle leaders. You are proud of your team and believe that much of their work has impacted positively on pupils' progress. The two new senior leaders, particularly, have had significant impact in the brief amount of time they have been in post. The arrangements to provide high-quality support to pupils, particularly those falling behind and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are much improved. Pupil progress meetings involve all staff, including leaders, class teachers and the learning mentor. You said that this ensures that the pupils gain a comprehensive programme of support that is regularly reviewed and adapted if needed. Early indications are that pupils' outcomes are improving as a result of this work.

Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 for the most able pupils remain a challenge as they are not yet as good as are needed. You and the governing body are well aware of this and improvement plans are in place. Leaders have looked closely at the curriculum to scrutinise the learning skills that pupils need in order to achieve at the higher levels. You said that you want to avoid 'teaching to the test'. Instead you want to make sure that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are carefully nurtured. Year 6 pupils told the inspector that they liked it when they were challenged by their teacher. They said that they particularly enjoyed it when subjects 'crossed over', for example when combining poetry, art and history in their study of the Holocaust. Outcomes for the current Year 6 pupils indicate that a greater proportion of them will achieve at a greater depth and will make the progress they should. You recognise that still more is needed to ensure that the most able pupils truly achieve their potential in all the subjects they study.

Pupil premium funding is used effectively to address the many barriers for eligible pupils. A great deal of successful work takes place to make sure that disadvantaged pupils attend school, arrive to school punctually and are safe and behave well in their lessons. Some disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, however, do not make the progress that their starting points indicate they could. We discussed the pupil premium strategy and agreed that key actions within this could more closely address this issue. Impact measures could be sharpened so that governors can more carefully monitor that actions are making the difference they should to the pupils concerned.

Pupils' writing is a key priority. You are determined that as pupils progress from the early years to Year 6, they are developing the skills needed to be confident, independent writers. Leaders acknowledge that, previously, spelling and inconsistently good joined handwriting had been particular barriers for some pupils, particularly boys. To address this, you have implemented the strategy of developing pupils' editing skills. Pupils learn to continually check, review and improve the quality and accuracy of their writing. They learn to write for a range of purposes and across the full range of subjects that they study. The quality of some pupils' writing is impressive, particularly at key stage 1.

You know that external information can often indicate that pupils' attendance, particularly the regular absence of disadvantaged pupils, is an issue. In this below-

average-sized school, the percentages relating to pupils' attendance, particularly when involving groups of children, can sometimes be skewed because the numbers of pupils are so low. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, have attendance that is in line with the national average. Pupils are punctual to school. There are good systems in place to ensure that pupils are in school and are learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. All staff are aware of the processes they need to follow in order to support the most vulnerable pupils in the school. Regular meetings take place in order that all staff are well informed. Staff receive the appropriate training.

Pupils and their families are known extremely well. The learning mentor plays an extraordinarily valuable role. Her communication with and support of parents is extremely strong. Many parents were determined to inform the inspector of the high-quality support they had received, particularly in 'difficult times'.

Pupils said that they feel safe within their school. They said that if bullying did occur it would be addressed immediately and effectively by their teachers. They said that they had someone to speak with if they were in trouble. Pupils particularly liked that they had an 'I want to tell something to my teacher' box in each classroom. They said that this was a helpful way to communicate and ask for help if they needed to.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves healthy and safe. For example, they have been taught about healthy lifestyles and how to be safe on a bicycle when riding on the roads. They know how to keep safe from harm when using the computer or mobile telephone.

The newly appointed school administrator is managing staff recruitment records efficiently. These records have improved as a result of her work.

Inspection findings

- The chair of governors is highly effective in the role. She has a good understanding of the strengths of the schools and the areas that still need to improve further. Governors are determined to challenge and support leaders in order to ensure that the school is the best that it can be for the community that it serves.
- Leaders are involved in a range of school partnerships, including with a local teaching school. The quality and accuracy of assessment have improved because of the moderation and checking that take place between staff from within these partnerships.
- Teaching assistants are highly effective in their role. They promote the independence of the pupils they support because they ask high-quality questions that help pupils to 'think for themselves'.

- Transition arrangements are strong, particularly as pupils move to their next class or the next stage in their learning. Teachers have good information about those pupils that require support. As a result, no time is lost and pupils' progress is accelerated.
- Parents whose children were new to the school were keen to praise the quality of information, guidance and support they received. All said that their child had settled to school extremely well.
- Pupils appreciate the rewards that they receive. They like the 'golden ticket' and particularly enjoy the 'golden hour'. They said that they enjoyed being able to choose how to spend their reward time.
- The pupil council is appreciated by pupils. The actions of this group are responded to and they have had impact on improving the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue the effective work to ensure that the most able pupils achieve as their starting points indicate that they should, particularly at key stage 2
- further improve the pupil premium strategy and make sure that eligible pupils make the same or better progress as others do nationally
- continue the effective work to improve pupils' independent writing skills, particularly those of boys.

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 Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Ashman
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- During the inspection, you and I toured the school to look at learning in all the classrooms. I met with all staff.
- I held meetings with you and your leadership team, including the chair of the governing body. Additionally I spoke with the learning mentor who is also the named person for early help in the school.
- Alongside yourself and the leadership team, a range of key stage 1 and 2 pupils' writing was scrutinised.

- I spoke with a group of Year 6 pupils. Additionally, I spoke with 10 parents at the start of the school day.
- A wide range of the school's documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school action plan, data on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance and behaviour records and safeguarding procedures, was reviewed.
- The 30 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and the 12 responses to the online staff questionnaire were taken into account.