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Mrs Susan Youngs
Headteacher
Diss Church School
The Entry
Diss
Norfolk
IP22 4NT

Dear Mrs Youngs

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Diss Church School

Following my visit to your school on 23 June 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about issues raised about behaviour in the previous inspection report. The school was given no notice that this inspection was to take place.

Evidence

I gathered a range of evidence including:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with pupils
- scrutiny of incident reports, pupils' individual plans, the single central record of checks on staff's suitability to work with children
- discussions with leaders, staff, parents and pupils.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time pupils' behaviour and safety require improvement.

Context

There are 214 pupils on roll. Higher than average proportions of pupils are supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils supported by additional funding for children in local authority care, those with a parent in the armed services and for those known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is half the national average.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour and safety of pupils are not yet good because pupils' learning behaviour does not support good achievements. Pupils are compliant and well behaved in class but too many contribute too little, unless they are challenged to contribute more, when they often respond well. This is linked to the quality of teaching over time, particularly to how much is expected of pupils and how often they are challenged to do well. Nevertheless, discussions with pupils, their parents and staff show that actions taken following the previous inspection have improved pupils' behaviour. Senior staff took decisive action to tackle the issues about behaviour identified at that time.

Behaviour on the playground was a particular focus and is much improved. Pupils play well together. Training for staff and the appointment of a member of staff with particular responsibility to develop pupils' play skills and their cooperation have worked well to promote a very positive atmosphere at playtimes. There are always plenty of games to play, games that are of interest to pupils, new games to learn and help from play leaders to encourage fair play and consideration for others.

Pupils know how to stay safe on the playground and know, for example, not to go into the bushes. But they say that some pupils do and that they are not always spotted by staff. The site presents potential difficulties for supervising pupils but supervision is well thought through and the rules are clear. There are some trip hazards that have not been remedied yet and risk assessments focus on the state of the building rather than on the school grounds.

Actions taken to develop pupils' understanding of social media and the potential for its misuse have worked well to raise their awareness. The policy for e-safety gives good guidance and promotes high expectations for knowledge, understanding and good attitudes. Pupils that I spoke to have an adequate understanding of different types of bullying, which they say is a focus of their learning during anti-bullying week. But they do not have a good understanding of why people might get bullied. They could not give examples other than anti-bullying week and some assemblies where bullying is specifically discussed or explored. There is no anti-bullying policy, and guidance for staff about bullying is not in enough detail in other policies. The governing body has appropriately revised most of the policies for promoting pupils' well-being, but not the policy for behaviour management. The single central register shows that the appropriate checks have been undertaken for staff's suitability to work with children.

The school's Code of Conduct is prominently displayed in classes. The rewards and sanctions are well understood by pupils and consistently applied by staff. Parents that I spoke to raised no concerns about pupils' behaviour or the management of

behaviour by school staff. However, neither the governing body nor senior staff have formally collected the views of parents, pupils or staff for some time.

Pupils with complex behavioural difficulties often participate well in lessons and on the playground, according to the level of their emotional and social skills. They feel well supported and say that their own behaviour has improved, but they find it difficult to explain how and why. Targets and individual education plans are not smart enough to help them focus on small improvements. Targets are not changed frequently enough. Added to this, there is a lot of information that describes their behaviour but it is not specific enough to show how or why their behaviour is improving. Information about pupils' behaviour, such as rewards, sanctions and incident reports are useful when looking at the behaviour of individuals. It is not pulled together at a strategic level to look at strengths or weaknesses that could indicate the effectiveness of teaching, the curriculum and behaviour management. However, since the previous inspection and as a result of raising the profile of behaviour in class and on the playground, there is a lot of useful professional discussion about pupils' personal development.

A few pupils only attend part-time because of their behaviour. These part-time programmes have been going on for too long. Senior staff and the local authority must address this with urgency so that all pupils have the full-time education that they are entitled to.

Attendance of pupils on part-time programmes is inappropriately recorded as a proportion of the sessions that they could attend, rather than as a proportion of full-time education. The attendance for the whole school has stayed consistently in line with the national average all year, which reflects improved attendance by many pupils.

Priorities for further improvement

- make sure that all pupils have a full-time educational programme
- challenge pupils to take initiative and make sure that they are attentive to what the teacher wants them to achieve
- make sure that pupils with disabilities or special educational needs have targets that are specific, easily measurable and can be achieved quickly
- agree and implement a revised behaviour management policy, making sure that it reflects current guidance and good practice.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Diocese of Norwich. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley
Her Majesty's Inspector