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Mrs E Barrow  
St Aidan's Church of England Voluntary Aided First School  
Smithy Close  
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Huddersfield  
West Yorkshire  
HD8 9DQ

Dear Mrs Barrow

### **Short inspection of St Aidan's Church of England Voluntary Aided First School**

Following my visit to the school on 26 January 2016, 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 October 2010.

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

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have effective systems for monitoring the quality of provision and pupils' achievement, and these contribute well to your accurate evaluation of the school's performance. This forms a firm foundation for identifying the school's priorities and planning for improvement. Governors regularly track how well the development plan is being implemented.

You have tackled the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. In part, the successful developments in middle leadership have been overtaken by considerable changes in staffing. Nonetheless, training for middle leaders is under way and you are managing the responsibilities for subject leadership effectively during this period of change. You have used the introduction of the new National Curriculum, and a new national approach to assessment without levels, to establish a more demanding approach to mathematics. The development of new assessment processes for mathematics is under way as you and your staff seek the most effective way of ensuring that pupils' build on their learning. Pupils have challenging targets and their progress towards these is tracked regularly.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

You, your staff and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are robust and fit for purpose. Regular training, alongside effective systems and procedures, including for safer recruitment, ensure that staff and governors are alert to any risks to pupils' well-being. An annual audit helps to highlight any aspects of safeguarding which could be strengthened. Governors check to ensure that the improvements required are made. The high priority given to keeping pupils safe was confirmed by pupils who spoke knowledgeably about e-safety and road safety. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and are confident that, should they have any concerns, there is always an adult they can turn to. They say that bullying is rare, although they know that sometimes people say unkind things to one another. Pupils welcome the new 'Can I tell you' boxes in each classroom. In these, they can place anonymous comments, worries and requests of any sort, secure in the knowledge that the headteacher will deal with these promptly.

Currently, up-to-date information about safeguarding, including policies and procedures, is not available on the school's website. You and the governing body are aware of this shortfall and there are plans in place to remedy this when the website is revamped, as planned, next month.

## **Inspection findings**

- Your robust leadership of teaching and assessment has helped to improve pupils' learning. You have taken firm action to address weaker teaching and to ensure that teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils rise to these expectations, showing great pride in the way they present their work.
- Children get off to a flying start in the Reception class. Overall, what they know and can do when they join the school is typical for their age. However, in both 2014 and 2015, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the year was much higher than seen nationally. Children are very well prepared for Year 1 in all aspects of their learning. This firm foundation is built on well, as is evident from the well-above-average proportion of pupils who reach the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening. There is a rising trend in national assessment results at the end of Year 2. In 2015, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was well above average. The school's tracking, borne out by the work in pupils' books, shows that pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2. Carefully targeted interventions help those who are falling behind to catch up.
- A key reason why pupils achieve well is their enthusiasm for learning. This is fostered very effectively by a curriculum built around topics. Pupils are keen to find out, for instance, about rainforests, and have plenty of opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills as they investigate. The work currently under way to develop outdoor learning as an approach for all age groups, is helping to capture pupils' interest and expand their ways of learning. It is proving very effective in raising boys' achievement, which is

above that of boys nationally.

- The school's Christian ethos contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are polite, courteous and eager to take on responsibilities, for instance as school councillors, play leaders and buddies, because caring for others is central to school life. Their very positive attitudes to learning are encouraged by the wide range of extra-curricular clubs covering interests such as art, singing, running, sports, film animation and collective worship. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about these as well as about residential visits, which are clearly a highlight for older pupils.
- Governance is effective. You keep the governing body well informed about the school's work and governors visit regularly because they are actively involved in the life of the school. A governor is attached to each class and some are able to participate in activities such as outings. The governing body provides effective challenge to leaders, for instance through checking on how well pupils are learning by comparing data about pupils' progress with their work.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's new website meets statutory requirements and promotes better communication with parents
- the new assessment processes are embedded effectively so that pupils build their understanding of mathematics effectively
- the development of the outdoor curriculum continues so that pupils' enjoyment of learning is nurtured and their achievement rises.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director for Children and Young People in Kirklees and the Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jane Austin  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this short, one-day inspection, I met with you, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, a number of governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a group of Key Stage 2 pupils who volunteered to talk to me. I talked informally to pupils at break and lunchtime, and to parents at the end of the school day. Together, you and I visited all the classes in the school to observe practice and talk to pupils about their learning. We looked at a sample of Key Stage 2 pupils' work in their mathematics and science books, and in their topic folders, to confirm that

pupils are continuing to make at least the expected rate of progress in key subject areas. The school's procedures for keeping pupils safe were checked and discussed with governors. The school's self-evaluation, development plan, progress data, policies and information published on the school website were considered. Responses to Ofsted's parental questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. Prior to the inspection there were four responses; by the end there were 47, including 23 comments. The 13 staff questionnaires completed were all very positive about the school.