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Mrs Alison Richardson
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Richardson

Short inspection of The Primary School of St Mary and St Martin

Following my visit to the school on 11 May 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 November 2010.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since arriving in September 2014, you have sustained the high expectations of all staff to ensure that pupils make good progress and achieve their potential. All the staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey stated that they felt proud to work at St Mary and St Martin. They explain how the school is aspirational for its pupils' success, and those who were employed at the time of the last inspection confirm that the school has continued to improve. One of the most successful of your initiatives has been establishing good links with other schools within the Minster School Teaching Alliance. This, together with work from Serlby Family of Schools, has helped teachers to moderate their assessments of pupils' work and improved their skills as staff from the different schools share ideas.

You have produced a detailed evaluation of your school, giving clear reasons why it remains good. From this, you and the staff have agreed an exceptionally clear improvement plan. At its core is the further raising of outcomes for pupils. Because of the highly effective monitoring systems you have embedded, you and members of the governing body can evaluate easily the impact of the actions you are taking. Governors have a secure understanding of the strengths of the school and play an effective strategic role in helping to ensure that improvements continue. Despite being supportive of your work, they hold you rigorously to account and challenge you where pupils' outcomes need to be even better.

At the last inspection, the inspector praised the school for its cheerful, welcoming environment and the strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. This has continued. It remains a very caring learning environment where staff ensure that all pupils are well looked after. At the time, the inspector judged that pupils needed more opportunities to learn about other cultures. You have ensured that staff have dealt with this area for improvement effectively. The lead inspector also judged that leaders should enhance the progress of the most-able pupils, particularly in mathematics. Information you provided, confirmed in the sample of pupils' books I examined during my visit, shows that the most-able pupils are now given more challenging work, which is appropriately matched to their needs. As a result, these pupils are making good progress. Teachers are clear about what they expect the most-able pupils to learn, and give them enough time to complete their tasks well. However, not all teachers ensure that pupils of all abilities receive sufficient opportunities to use their skills in mathematics to answer word-based problems. As a result, the progress of pupils in mathematics is not yet rapid in all year groups.

Classrooms are purposeful working environments where pupils behave well and learn together. In the Reception class, I saw children busily engaged in activities about 'Goldilocks and the three bears'. Some children were matching different beds and bowls of porridge to each of the bears, while others were using play equipment together to pretend to mend Baby Bear's broken chair. Children were excited to cooperate, reminding each other to put their yellow safety helmets on before they began and telling each other, 'This is a very tricky job!' Good work continues in key stage 1, where pupils learn how to add complex numbers together. One Year 2 pupil explained to his teacher how he had calculated correctly that 2×4 added to 13×7 was 99. By Year 6, pupils are learning how to calculate angles using Pythagoras' theorem and writing reflective poetry about Africa. One pupil had written how 'animals reign and roam the wild savannah' and how 'dark, sandy hills lay on the horizon's edge'. Pupils say that they like the work that teachers give them to do, and it is challenging for them, as well as being exciting.

You are aware that in the early years and key stage 1, pupils did not attain as highly as other pupils did nationally last year. This is because, more recently, the school has admitted a considerable number of vulnerable pupils, many with very complex needs. These pupils began at the school with levels of skills well below those typically found in pupils of the same age. However, they are nevertheless making good progress from their attainment on entry. Results in mathematics in Year 6 began to improve last year from those in 2014, when they were significantly below the national average. This was because teaching for these pupils was not consistently good over time. However, teachers' own assessments showed that pupils' attainment in mathematics across the school remained broadly in line with others nationally. The subject leader for mathematics has since helped teachers to improve their teaching. Good teaching in the school overall is resulting in pupils making good progress from their starting points.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff make the safeguarding of children your highest priority. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and trust any member of staff to help them if they have any concerns. You ensure that staff teach pupils about the risks they may encounter as they grow up, including the risk from strangers. Older pupils are taught to avoid harmful substances and gang-related pressure they may face.

You have ensured that your staff have been thoroughly trained, including in areas of recent national concern, such as radicalisation. They could describe to me the warning signs of possible abuse, and know that it is their first duty to report any concern to you. You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and the sample of records I examined are detailed and of high quality. In addition, the governor who has a particular responsibility to monitor safeguarding completes an annual audit of areas such as safer recruitment. Parents who responded to both the leaders' annual questionnaire and to Parent View strongly agree that the school keeps their children safe.

Inspection findings

- You have continued to improve the school. You ensure that, because the school is much smaller than average, staff work closely together and share their knowledge of pupils. For example, the subject leader for mathematics now has a good overview of the quality of teaching in the school because he has more opportunities to visit other classes and to examine pupils' work. Staff, including those who feel less confident, are given good opportunities to improve their skills through training and staff meetings.
- Both you and the governors have a detailed understanding of the strengths of the school, and can discuss these with confidence, along with the most important things required to move the school on further. With the staff, you have produced a highly effective school development plan that includes multi-layered ways of checking that actions have taken place. As a result, leaders and governors are able to evaluate the impact of the actions of staff, and adjust these actions where they are not proving successful enough.
- Governors play an effective part in ensuring that the school continues to improve. They monitor the school budget carefully, and check systems such as teachers' appraisal. They ensure that teachers' classroom performance justifies any salary rises which they award.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. All the parents I met during my visit were extremely positive about the school's leadership, confirming that their children made good progress due to effective teaching there. One parent I met told me how staff also give parents good levels of information about their child's progress. Another explained how 'a good head makes a good school'. These positive responses are reflected in those received through Parent View and the school's own questionnaires.
- Information provided by the school shows that pupils are making good and improving progress from their starting points. The proportion of children on track to gain a good level of development by the time they leave the Reception class is set to rise to above the existing national average. Almost all the pupils in the school are making the progress expected of them, with the majority making more than this. The large majority of pupils are

expected to reach at least the levels expected for their age, with increasing proportions showing a deeper understanding. The most-able pupils in the school are also making good and improving progress.

- There are too few disadvantaged pupils in the school to be able to report on their outcomes, or their attendance, without the risk of identifying them. However, leaders are spending the pupil premium effectively to ensure that those pupils are well supported. Leaders are also ensuring that the attendance of these pupils is as high as possible. Overall attendance of pupils in the school remains in line with the national average.
- In more recent years, the school has admitted an increasing number of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, many with complex needs. Although the overall progress of these pupils is good from their starting points, many do not achieve the standards typically expected for their age by the time they leave key stage 1. Nevertheless, they are well supported by staff, who know their needs and give them the work they need to make good gains.
- Pupils' good progress is confirmed by the selection of work seen from all year groups during my visit. Pupils are learning to write with increasing skill for a wide range of purposes, and to calculate with accuracy as they grow up. Pupils in Year 3 had, for example, learned how to calculate the third angle from a triangle where they were only given the two other angles. The progress of pupils in mathematics in a small number of classes is not as rapid as it is in other year groups in the school, however. This is because, in these year groups, pupils do not receive sufficient opportunities to use the skills they have to solve word-based problems.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. The school's religious ethos means that pupils quickly become reflective and considerate. This begins with children in the Reception class learning about the idea of trust. One child had written, 'I trust my family because they look after me. Trust is when I love them and they love me back'. Pupils of all ages take care of the school and look after each other. Pupils' work on understanding fundamental British values is also displayed proudly in all areas of the school. Pupils know about, and respect, people who are different from themselves, or may have other faiths or cultures. They know it is important to behave well and to, as one pupil explained, 'do the right things'.
- The curriculum gives good opportunities for pupils to find out about other countries, and I saw pupils learning about a school in South Africa during my visit. Year 5 pupils I met were keen to explain to me how they have set up a link with a school in New Delhi, India, and were enjoying exchanging letters with the pupils there. Pupils also enjoy the many extra-curricular clubs that staff provide for them, such as French, Bible club, creative writing, choir, gardening, photography and multi-sports. Pupils say that they particularly enjoy how the sporting activities that staff arrange at lunchtimes keep them healthy.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- pupils' progress in mathematics becomes consistently rapid by giving pupils sufficient, regular opportunities to apply their skills to word-based problems.

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

Yours sincerely

Roary Pownall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, representatives of the governing body and the subject leader for mathematics. We visited all classes to observe teaching and learning. I looked at pupils' work across the school. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and met with groups of them at breaktime. I considered the views of 26 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, alongside the school's most recent published questionnaire results. I also met parents at the end of the school day. I read a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, your school development plan and information on outcomes for pupils currently in the school. I studied information related to attendance, anonymised examples of teachers' appraisals and examined safeguarding records and policies. I met with staff at the beginning of the school day to investigate their knowledge of safeguarding and their training they had received. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information. I looked at the range of views expressed by staff, through Ofsted's questionnaire, about the school and its leadership.