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Mrs Tracy Fulthorpe  
Headteacher  
The Gainsborough Parish Church Primary School  
Acland Street  
Gainsborough  
Lincolnshire  
DN21 2LN

Dear Mrs Fulthorpe

### **Short inspection of The Gainsborough Parish Church Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 04 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in December 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your team provide a curriculum which inspires the pupils to learn. As a result, most pupils make good progress through the school. Parents are very supportive and value the school's work. One parent wrote, 'Keep up the good work, team Parish!'

You and your assistant headteacher lead the school well. You have maintained a strong focus to improve pupils' achievement. You and the teachers regularly review each pupil's progress and put in extra support if a pupil is at risk of underachievement. As a result, outcomes at the end of Year 6 have risen since the previous inspection.

At the previous inspection, the inspectors asked you to improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that activities meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. You have had much success with this. The vast majority of teaching is consistently good. As a result, outcomes over the past three years have improved for the most able pupils in reading and mathematics in both key stages 1 and 2, and in writing at key stage 2. Currently, pupils with special educational needs or disability are also progressing well. However, some middle-attaining pupils at the end of key stage 1 did not make as much progress as they should have in reading and writing by the end of key stage 2 in the 2015 outcomes.

The inspector also asked you to develop pupils' mathematical skills. The assistant headteacher and the current mathematics leader have led the subject well. Pupils regularly complete tasks which develop their reasoning skills about number to further develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding. Pupils I spoke with were highly positive about mathematics and enjoy the challenges that teachers provide. As a result, the current school achievement information and work in pupils' books show that pupils are attaining well.

You have identified the need to improve writing, particularly for boys and disadvantaged pupils, and the spelling ability of all pupils. You have increased the range of writing opportunities across the curriculum to appeal to boys and they are enthused to write. However, pupils are not always building their stamina to write at length and consequently their writing composition is not as well developed as it should be. The spelling ability of many pupils is below age-related expectations.

I have asked you to use the external review of pupil premium funding to write sharper success criteria by which you and governors can check if the funding is being used effectively to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The assistant headteacher and family worker work very closely with a range of external agencies to safeguard children, particularly with Home Start. The family worker is skilled at offering help to families to meet their needs. The local authority has recognised the school's work in this area and is using the family worker to spread good practice to other schools. Records are of high quality and are securely stored. Governors have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and a named governor works with the school leaders to complete an annual audit of the school's safeguarding procedures. The school closely monitors pupils' attendance and takes prompt action if a pupil's absence increases. As a result, the current attendance for all groups of pupils is high. The leadership has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

The school's behaviour log shows very few incidents of poor behaviour this year. The pupils told me that behaviour is good around the school. Despite having limited space outside, pupils play a variety of games cooperatively at break and lunchtimes. A minority of pupils in the pupil survey said that school staff do not always deal with bullying as well as they could. I know you have recently reviewed your procedures with bullying and are now using the family worker to help resolve issues that may arise.

### **Inspection findings**

- Your systems for promoting school improvement are good. You regularly review the progress of all pupils with the teachers to identify any areas where pupils may need extra support to ensure that they make good progress. In addition, these reviews also address any professional development needs for teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that the

quality of teaching is consistently good or better. As a result, outcomes for pupils have risen in both key stages 1 and 2 since the previous inspection.

- Your school improvement plan identifies the main priorities to improve the pupils' learning even further and allows governors to hold school leaders to account. Governors regularly visit the school and have a good strategic view of how well the school is doing. They ask pertinent questions at their meetings to school leaders to check how well groups of pupils are doing. As a result, governors are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The gaps between the achievements of disadvantaged pupils and others is closing in most year groups, according to the school's current information, in reading and mathematics, but less so in writing. You organised a review of how you spend the pupil premium funding to improve the achievements of disadvantaged pupils and provide a range of support, which includes small group teaching and one-to-one provision. However, there are not clear success criteria by each action so that you and governors can check where the funding is being used most effectively to promote pupils' achievements.
- The school promotes pupils' reading well. Disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school have achieved higher than the national average in the Year 1 phonics check for the past three years. Pupils have appreciated the recent investment into new reading books and enjoy reading a range of books by different authors, including Michael Morpurgo, Roald Dahl and David Walliams. The school has a focus on improving the pupils' comprehension of texts as they move through the school and, as a result, outcomes for reading at the end of key stage 2 have been consistently just above the national average for the past three years.
- Children in the early years make good progress from their starting points and achieve just below others nationally by the end of the Reception Year. The children are encouraged to use their phonics knowledge to spell new words. Children have the opportunity to saw and hammer using a work bench. The aim is to improve the children's fine motor skills to be able to hold a pencil and write more comfortably. Children have made steady progress with their writing. However, the most-able children could extend their ideas by writing more.
- You and your team have focused your efforts to improve boys' writing in particular. Teachers have planned a range of interesting tasks to promote writing. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils have researched and written about Louis Braille. Pupils throughout the school are using a range of grammatical techniques in their sentences. However, boys are not yet writing as well as girls in the majority of year groups in the school. This is largely because they are given too few opportunities to write at length or to build their stamina for writing. In addition, many pupils, both boys and girls, do not take enough care to refine their spelling skills. Pupils' books show that they do not take enough care to correct spelling mistakes. This limits their ability to learn to spell words correctly.
- The school prepares the pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils are respectful of people who may have different lifestyles from their own. Pupils regularly visit the local church, and have visited a Hindu temple and a synagogue. Consequently, pupils are respectful of other faiths. The elected

school council has recently visited the Houses of Parliament to learn about national democracy.

- Pupils with special educational needs or disability are well supported in school and are making good progress. The school uses a range of external agencies to meet the pupils' needs. The special educational needs coordinator carefully tracks the progress that pupils make and adapts the school provision if pupils are not making the expected progress.
- Pupils concentrate well in lessons and enjoy their residential trips. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have been learning about mountains and pupils researched and wrote biographies of the mountaineer Sir Edmund Hillary. Years 3 and 4 have recently enjoyed an outdoor activity residential trip – despite the snow. In addition, the school participates in many sporting competitions and has achieved great success. Recently, the school reached the national finals of the British Schools' Biathlon Championships. The sports coordinator was awarded the title of Sports' Educator of the Year for Lincolnshire in 2015.
- The school has some impressive art work on display. Some pupils, who were accompanied by a professional photographer, took impressive photographs of Gainsborough which they have edited and are on display around the school. The town mayor visited the exhibition. In addition, pupils have studied the work of the artist Antony Gormley, visited his exhibition and created their own human figures out of clay.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- standards in writing improve, particularly for boys, by giving more opportunities for pupils to write at length to develop into good writers
- pupils' ability to spell improves by making sure that pupils correct their mistakes
- the impact of pupil premium funding on pupils' achievement is checked more closely, to ensure that the gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others in reading, writing and mathematics are closing more quickly.

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

Martin Finch  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I met you, the assistant headteacher, the family worker and the leaders for English, mathematics and special educational needs or disability. I also met the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. We visited every classroom and I spoke to pupils and reviewed their work in books. I met with a group of pupils from key stages 1 and 2 and observed pupils at breaktime and lunchtime. We viewed records about keeping children safe, attendance and pupils' behaviour. I looked at your self-evaluation, school improvement plan, pupil premium review, evaluation of teaching and learning, minutes of the governing body meetings and performance management documentation. I spoke to parents in the playground, considered the six text responses from Ofsted's text service to parents, a letter from a parent, the seven responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 20 responses from the pupil survey.