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Mr Daniel Turull
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Turull

Short inspection of Farrington Gurney Church of England School

Following my visit to the school on Wednesday 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 May 2011.

This school continues to be good.

You and members of the governing body have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You act quickly and decisively to tackle any emerging weaknesses.

At the time of the previous inspection, it was noted that pupils did not spell accurately when they completed writing tasks across the curriculum. Current work shows that pupils are better able to use the correct spellings in their written work and regularly practise words that are new to them. Nevertheless, the presentation of their work needs improving, including letter formation and the way in which they set out digits in mathematics books.

The school was also asked to increase the opportunities for pupils to learn about different faiths and religions. Pupils talk knowledgeably about different faiths, such as Judaism, Buddhism and Islam. They have visited a Jewish synagogue and contrasted this place of worship with the local church. The pupils have not yet visited a Hindu temple, but that is planned in the near future. Teachers choose interesting topics for pupils to learn about and this helps them gain a wider knowledge of different cultures. For example, pupils learned about the beliefs of the Aztecs and life in Mexico today, including how to cook Mexican food.

You and the governing body have recognised that, over time, the most able pupils have not been sufficiently challenged to enable them to flourish academically. During this academic year, you have been tackling this effectively by providing staff

training on how to deepen and broaden pupils' knowledge. Teachers are using ideas from this training well to extend pupils' learning. You have also rightly been concentrating on improving overall standards in reading, which have not been as strong as those in writing and mathematics.

Over the last year, you and your governors have made sure that the school's resources are efficiently deployed. The vast majority of parents who completed the online Parent View questionnaire and submitted comments to Ofsted speak very highly of the school. In particular, they highlight the improvements which have been made over the last year. As one parent explained, 'the new headteacher is making a real difference to the school and is supportive and encouraging to both pupils and staff'.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have created a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. You know the families whose children attend Farrington Gurney very well and keep a close eye on every pupil, especially those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed. Policies and procedures are kept up to date and are firmly adhered to. Staff are well trained and any concerns are followed up, either by you as the designated safeguarding lead or by the senior teacher in your absence.

You and your governors fully understand how to recruit safely and ensure that all staff are carefully vetted prior to employment. You have a clear understanding of the need to protect pupils against all possible risks. Governors regularly carry out health and safety checks to make sure that the school is a safe place. You have recently undertaken training on the government's 'Prevent' duty, which deals with the risks of radicalisation, and plan to provide all staff with the same training shortly.

All parents who responded to the online Parent View questionnaire reported that the school is a safe place for their children to attend. As one parent explained, this is 'a lovely small family school where everyone is cared for'.

The pupils I spoke to during my visit all reported that they feel safe and know who they would speak to if they have a worry or concern. For example, they demonstrated a secure knowledge of the importance of e-safety and explained the dangers of internet scams and cyber bullying.

Inspection findings

- The small size of the school means it is unhelpful to attempt to compare pupils' attainment and progress over time with that of their peers nationally. However, inspection evidence confirms that currently all pupils in the school are making consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, with some outstanding achievement.
- This rapid progress is, in part, due to the school's work to increase the level of challenge for average- and higher-attaining pupils, which had been

identified as an aspect of teaching that required further training. Pupils are now given more opportunities to think of different ways to develop their skills or present their findings. The challenge given to the most able pupils was evident in the Year 6 mathematics books: once pupils have mastered a technique, they then use their skills to find different ways to solve problems. A small number of parents who responded to the online questionnaire raised some concerns about levels of challenge, but you are addressing these concerns by raising expectations and training teachers to demand more from pupils.

- In 2015, boys did not do as well as girls in the Year 1 national phonics check. Since then, their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make has developed in a range of ways, and boys now readily show that they can form letters and repeat the sounds they make. They are now on track to meet age-related expectations by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of writing in different styles, such as letters or stories and recording facts and findings. However, the presentation of their work and handwriting style still need attention.
- Your reorganisation of the school day to ensure that there is a specific time for reading has had a positive impact on reading standards. The pupils I spoke to during my visit were eager readers who talked enthusiastically about their favourite authors.
- You use extra government funding well to support disadvantaged pupils. Well-targeted support and opportunities to participate in additional activities enable these pupils to achieve as well as other pupils nationally. Pupils with special educational needs or disability are also well supported.
- You and your staff are extremely vigilant in ensuring that every pupil attends school regularly. Consequently, attendance rates have improved during this academic year and are above national averages.
- Pupils engage fully in lessons and concentrate on their learning. We watched them eagerly beaver away at their work as they responded to the tasks that had been set by their teachers.
- In my discussions with Year 6 pupils, they were very proud to tell me about the wide range of clubs and after-school activities that are available to them. These not only help them to develop a range of different skills, but also to work and play confidently and fairly alongside their peers. As one parent explained, the introduction of 'lots of extra-curricular activities encourages everybody to get involved, not just the very confident'.
- You have established a consistent approach to behaviour management which is clearly understood by all pupils and staff. The pupils I spoke to reported that bullying is not a problem. They are very clear that it is not acceptable to be racist or homophobic. Although a few disagree, most parents think that behaviour is good, saying for example that you have 'done well in a short time to address the standard of behaviour at the school'. Inspectors observed very good behaviour in lessons, confirming the picture presented in the school's records of behaviour over time. Pupils also behave well as they walk in and around school, being polite and courteous.
- Your school improvement strategies have included the development of the role of middle leaders. As a consequence, teachers with responsibility for

different subjects and aspects of the school's work are beginning to influence and promote teaching, learning and pupils' progress across the school.

- Governors state that they are now much more confident than in the past about their skills and ability to support the school and hold school leaders to account. They value the partnership that has been formed with you. They scrutinise carefully the reports you present to them and test the accuracy of the information they receive from you. This has enabled them to gain an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors are very clear about how extra additional funding is used to support disadvantaged pupils. They are steadily developing an understanding of the roles of teachers who are responsible for specific subjects and aspects of the curriculum. Governors readily challenge you and the performance of all staff to ensure that pupils are receiving the best possible education.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the role of the middle leaders is fully developed so that they are more involved in promoting pupils' progress in the subjects that they are responsible for through the school
- pupils make more effort with their work so that it is written neatly and in a legible style.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, three governors including the chair of the governing body, your school improvement partner and a representative from the local authority. I met with class teachers and 10 Year 6 pupils. I observed several classes. Although I did not see Year 6 pupils in class because they were involved in the national curriculum tests, we looked at a sample of pupils' books. I reviewed the comments made by staff and pupils on the online questionnaire. I looked at the results from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and considered the comments submitted by parents. I looked at documentation relating to safeguarding, assessment results, the school's self-evaluation and its development plan.