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Mr Wayne Jones
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Jones

Short inspection of Stanion Church of England (Aided) Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 December 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 September 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 have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's areas for development and an appropriate plan to further increase pupils' attainment. You have created an atmosphere of purposeful learning around the school. Leaders are open, honest and transparent. Your high expectations are shared by staff, governors and pupils.

Staff and pupils embody the school's Christian values and treat everyone with respect and kindness. Pupils are confident and articulate. They have a strong understanding of equality. One pupil told me, 'We accept everyone.'

You have maintained the significant strengths noted at the previous inspection, in particular, in terms of pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well and demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. They rarely miss a day of school. Pupils told me that they feel lucky and proud to be at the school.

Leaders have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment in writing has been consistently above the national average. You achieved this by introducing daily spelling, punctuation and handwriting practice for all pupils. Teachers encourage pupils to write neatly, using joined-up handwriting, and this begins in Year 1. Pupils are motivated by the monthly handwriting champion award. Their books are presented to a very high standard.

Leaders have ensured that the school continues to promote community cohesion. The school has close links with the local church and police. Volunteers from the village and the police regularly come into school and hear pupils read. Pupils learn how to be good members of society by raising money for the local food bank and chosen charities. You have also ensured that pupils learn about different faiths and beliefs as part of the school's religious education curriculum. They visit a gurdwara, a mosque and a Hindu temple to learn about different religions. Pupils understand that this helps them to appreciate the views of others. You have organised for pupils to exchange messages with pupils in Gambia to develop their understanding of different cultures.

Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment and progress have been at least in line with national expectations at key stage 2. However, last year, new national measures for judging pupils' achievement, which are not comparable with those for previous years, were introduced. Pupils' attainment in the school at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 dipped to below the national average in reading and mathematics. You have investigated the reasons for this and identified that it was pupils' underdeveloped reasoning skills, which resulted in their disappointing performance in the mathematics test. Leaders have since revised the mathematics curriculum to provide more well-planned and meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. You have ensured that this starts earlier in key stage 1. Evidence in pupils' mathematics books, across all year groups, demonstrates that they are now given more opportunities to discuss and practise these key mathematical skills. The school's assessment information and first-hand inspection evidence indicate that pupils' attainment in mathematics is improving as a result. However, you have identified that more pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, need to reach the higher standard in reading and mathematics.

You also investigated why pupils underachieved in the reading test and established that they struggled to complete the test in the allocated time. You have ensured that pupils now have more opportunities to practise reading comprehension skills and develop their stamina for completing work. Evidence seen on inspection, in lessons and in pupils' books, supports the school's current in-year information that all pupils will be back on track to achieve at least in line with national expectations this year in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

Leaders carefully track and monitor pupils' progress, including that of key groups such as disadvantaged pupils, the most able pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Regular pupil progress meetings, with leaders and teachers, identify any pupils who are not on track to make good progress from

their starting points. You then put in place individual learning plans and additional support for these pupils. You make sure that this support is regularly reviewed so that any interventions that are not enabling pupils to catch up are changed. You have identified that you would like to provide further opportunities and support for parents to be more directly involved in their children's learning and development in the early years.

Safeguarding is effective.

The deputy headteacher is the designated safeguarding leader and she is supported by two other staff, including you. You are all appropriately trained and keep your knowledge current through regular, online updates. The governing body and the local authority complete annual audits to check that safeguarding arrangements continue to be robust. All statutory checks on staff are carried out and recorded carefully. You rightly make the safety of pupils your highest priority. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of a high quality.

You have checked that staff have read and understood the latest government guidance. All staff know what to do if they have any concerns. You showed me some examples of this in practice, where staff had acted swiftly and followed school procedures appropriately. Leaders deal with all concerns promptly and are vigilant in pursuing any necessary further action with external agencies. Staff have had training so they can recognise how to protect pupils from the threat of radicalisation and extremism. You have also ensured that appropriate staff are trained in paediatric first aid.

Pupils who spoke with me said that they felt safe at the school. You have provided opportunities for them to learn about how to stay safe online and on their bikes. Pupils told me they enjoy the visits from the police and local magistrates that you organise.

Pupils say that bullying is very rare and were adamant that, if it did happen, it would be dealt with quickly and effectively by teachers. Your school's internal bullying logs corroborate this. Every classroom has a 'Can I talk?' box for pupils to share any worries they may have with their teachers. Teachers check these boxes daily. Posters on classroom doors remind pupils to, 'see it, say it, stop it.' You are aware that a minority of parents and carers remain concerned about bullying, so you plan to communicate further with parents, to reassure them about the effectiveness of the school's work.

Inspection findings

- You, the leadership team and governors have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You recognise that further improvements are needed in relation to more pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, achieving the higher standard in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The governing body provides you with effective support and challenge. It ensures that government funding is used to have a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- The governing body is vigilant in checking that the school's safeguarding arrangements are robust.
- High-quality assessment effectively underpins the school's work and is used well to plan learning that is appropriate for most pupils from their starting points. Leaders have adapted the school's assessment system to reflect recent changes to the curriculum and national performance measures. You carefully track and monitor pupils' performance in science and religious education, as well as in English and mathematics. Teachers work with other schools, moderating pupils' work, to ensure that assessments are accurate. The deputy headteacher has recently been appointed as a local authority moderator.
- Pupils understand clearly what they are trying to learn and achieve. They routinely read through their work from each lesson to help them understand what they do well and what they need to do to improve. Pupils work collaboratively together and support each other to make progress. They are aspirational and want to do their best. We observed lots of examples of pupils working together to improve their work.
- Pupils' books, including those of disadvantaged pupils, demonstrate the good progress that pupils make at the school. All teachers consistently use the school's marking policy.
- Pupils have consistently achieved above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1 because of the good-quality teaching and learning they receive. Teachers have high expectations for pupils and ensure that learning builds on their prior knowledge. Pupils enjoy the challenge. This is evidenced in their books. For example, one Year 1 pupil wrote, 'Rushing around the beach we searched frantically for the shiny, shimmering, purple pearl.'
- You have rightly identified that you want to ensure that more pupils go on to make greater progress from key stage 1 to key stage 2, and to reach the higher standards in reading and mathematics. Teachers now plan opportunities for the most able pupils to explore topics in more depth, to deepen their knowledge and understanding. We saw evidence of this during the inspection.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers and provide effective support for pupils in lesson. They ask pupils questions that develop their learning.

- Staff provide good support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders ensure that each pupil has an individual plan to support their learning. Pupils make good progress from their starting points because of the effective support and good teaching they receive.
- Leaders make sure that they meet children and their parents and get to know them before they start school, so that they settle quickly into the Reception class.
- Children in the early years are well prepared for key stage 1. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development at the end Reception Year has been consistently above national expectations. Children's learning journals show that they enjoy a wide range of activities and make good progress. Leaders have identified that they would like parents to contribute to their child's assessment in the early years based on home activities, so that every step in a child's early development is recorded.
- You have ensured that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics in your school. For the last three years, pupils' results in the phonics screening check in Year 1 have been significantly above national expectations. I heard pupils successfully applying reading techniques, such as sounding out unfamiliar words. Pupils read widely and often. You have created a love of reading in pupils. All pupils I spoke with told me that they enjoy reading. They could all name their favourite books and authors. The most able pupils are given books that are suitably challenging. Leaders have ensured that there is a book corner in every classroom and an inviting and well-stocked library. Pupils' reading journals demonstrate that they read regularly both in school and at home.
- Leaders have provided pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, which develops their spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills and prepares them well for secondary school. All pupils, including children in the early years, benefit from lessons in the school's information technology suite. All pupils in key stage 2 learn Spanish and a musical instrument. Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular after-school clubs provided for them.
- Leaders have ensured that the primary school physical education and sport premium funding is used effectively to promote pupils' engagement with sport. Pupils take part in a wide range of sports, both in school and competitively. The school has achieved the School Games Mark at silver level to recognise its positive promotion of sport.
- Leaders maintain a close focus on teaching and learning to reflect the school's commitment to continuous improvement. Staff benefit from highly relevant training, based on their performance management targets and whole-school improvements. For example, all staff have had training to understand the new mastery curriculum in mathematics.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, achieve the higher standard at the end of Year 6 in reading and mathematics
- further opportunities and support are provided for parents to be more directly involved in their children's learning and development in the early years.

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

Yours sincerely

Sally Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with parents at the start of the day and met with you, the deputy headteacher and four representatives from the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. I listened to pupils read and spoke with a group of pupils about their school experience. You, the deputy headteacher and I visited all classes and examined pupils' workbooks. In addition, I scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the single central register (the school's record of safeguarding recruitment checks on staff). I evaluated the school's documentation in relation to pupils' performance, improvement planning, attendance, and minutes of governing body meetings. I took account of 25 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, the 10 responses to the Ofsted free-text service and 15 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses from pupils to Ofsted's online survey.

This short inspection focused on:

- whether leaders had addressed the areas for improvement from the last inspection
- how leaders were responding to the dip in pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics at key stage 2 in 2016
- how leaders are tracking and monitoring key groups of pupils to ensure that they all make good progress from their starting points
- whether safeguarding was still effective across the school and pupils were safe.