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Mr David Barber
Headteacher
Hambleton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
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Dear Mr Barber

Short inspection of Hambleton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 January 2017, 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 December 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You took on the role of headteacher in September 2015. You have taken time to see how the school works and have maintained the many strengths in the partnership with parents and the good relationships between class teachers and pupils. The school continues to thrive and pupils are happy, well cared for and keen to achieve their best.

You have a clear vision to distribute leadership throughout the school, improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement. Together with senior leaders, you share a clear understanding of the school's work. Your analysis of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve further is precise and realistic. School plans for improvement are clearly focused to increase the progress pupils make. You and the senior team are taking swift and effective action to tackle the dip in attainment and progress in mathematics in 2016 in Year 6 and to strengthen the teaching of reading and writing in the early years and key stage 1. You have extended partnership working outside of the cluster of local schools and have used these links to good effect to develop the teaching of early writing skills.

Governors are well led and have a clear and realistic view of the school. They have a range of skills to support school development and, following a recent restructuring, are increasingly able to make use of them to support the school

through specialist responsibilities and links with subjects and classes. They visit often. As a result, they know that the strategies that you have put in place are having a positive impact in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematics, and that drawing and discussion are being used effectively to support younger children in developing their writing and communication. They are less confident about whether rates of progress are swift enough or that gaps between teachers' assessments and test results are closing. Current systems for tracking pupils' progress are overly focused on pupils reaching age-related expectations and the information provided does not always show their starting points. The information you present is not sufficiently detailed to enable leaders and governors to identify whether all pupils are challenged at a high level and are achieving at greater depth. Consequently, they are not able to fully challenge or hold you and other staff to account for your work in improving the school.

You have sought effective support from North Yorkshire local authority. Officers are working with you to evaluate the quality of the work to raise achievement in mathematics, reading and writing. They have found the work taking place to be good and securing improvements. Further work in the use of assessment data is planned.

Safeguarding is effective.

Responsibilities are taken seriously and pupils' safety and welfare are accorded the highest priority. Governors have a clear understanding of their duties. Policies and procedures are fit for purpose and suitably detailed records are kept. A culture of safeguarding being everyone's responsibility is well established. Staff, including those with classroom roles and those who have other roles, such as lunchtime supervisors, know how to recognise signs that may point to risks of harm to a pupil and how to report concerns. Appropriate checks are made when staff are recruited and on volunteers and those who visit the school regularly. All staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire agreed that the school is a safe place to be, as did all of the parents and pupils who completed questionnaires.

Inspection findings

- Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment and progress at key stage 1 have been at least in line with the national averages in reading and writing, except in 2016, when fewer pupils achieved the higher standards or were working at greater depth in their writing.
- Systems to evaluate the quality of teaching have become more rigorous. Feedback to teachers, as well as training, is used well to develop and strengthen classroom practice.
- Research is being used effectively to further develop teaching and learning. The recent initiative focused on reading, mark-making and early writing skills is helping to promote consistent practice in teaching these key skills.
- Teachers value the opportunities to learn from each other and to share ideas. Pupils are responding enthusiastically to the higher expectations and challenge.

- Current groups of children and pupils are making swift progress in writing and reading in early years and key stage 1.
- Trends in pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2 have been at least in line with the national average, except in 2016. New national measures for judging pupils' achievement have been introduced. These measures are not comparable with those of previous years.
- Pupils' attainment in the school at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 dipped below the national average in mathematics and reading. 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. A lack of challenge in reading and 'test readiness' was also identified. You are taking effective action to tackle these barriers.
- Revisions to the mathematics curriculum now provide more well-planned and meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Evidence in lessons and in pupils' mathematics books across all year groups demonstrates that they are now given more opportunities to discuss and practise these key mathematical skills. Pupils say that they are learning and understanding more. Some pupils in key stage 2 feel that they could be challenged more.
- School assessment information and first-hand evidence indicate that pupils' attainment in mathematics is improving as a result. However, you have identified that more pupils, including the most-able disadvantaged pupils, need to reach the higher standard in mathematics.
- Modifications to the way in which reading is taught throughout the school have given more emphasis to pupils studying ambitious texts, and pupils enjoy the weekly reading quiz which is encouraging them to read more carefully and deeply. As a result, achievement is improving.
- Strengths found in the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils are confident, articulate and polite. They are focused in lessons and enthusiastic learners; they want to learn and try their best to succeed.
- Good relationships between the school and parents ensure that pupils' learning, welfare, care and well-being are promoted effectively. Some parents would like more communication about pupils' progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- assessment data is evaluated more thoroughly, reported regularly to governors and used to set challenging targets for all pupils and groups.

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

Yours sincerely

Gina White
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Several lines of enquiry were pursued during the inspection. These included identifying how strong current pupils' achievement is in mathematics, particularly for those in key stage 2 classes; investigating why more pupils do not reach the higher standards in writing; establishing the effectiveness of governors in supporting the school and holding leaders to account; and the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils.

I met with you to discuss the impact of the action you are taking to raise standards in pupils' attainment. We also discussed the school's safeguarding arrangements. You accompanied me on brief visits to observe teaching and learning in Reception and in Years 1 and 2, where we observed the teaching of early writing and English and mathematics. We each looked at some pupils' books and spoke with some pupils about their learning. I listened to some pupils read.

I observed teaching in mathematics in Years 5 and 6 and looked at a sample of work in pupils' books. I also discussed pupils' work with them. Nineteen pupils from key stage 2 completed Ofsted's online questionnaire.

I met with members of the governing body, including the vice-chair of governors, and considered the email I had been sent by the chair of governors.

I met with a local authority primary improvement adviser who is supporting the work of senior leaders.

I considered the 38 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and met with three parents. I reviewed the eight responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.