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Miss Deborah Bramley  
Headteacher  
Howick Church Endowed Primary School  
Liverpool Road  
Penwortham  
Preston  
Lancashire  
PR1 0NB

Dear Miss Bramley

### **Short inspection of Howick Church Endowed Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 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 are rigorous in your approach to improving teaching and learning but also take account of the emotional well-being of the staff and pupils. This results in a happy school, where staff and pupils thrive and parents feel involved.

You have tackled the areas for improvement from the previous inspection well. The children currently in Reception are on track to reach the ambitious targets you have set. Overall outcomes in writing at the end of the early years have declined over the last 3 years. However, attainment is above that seen nationally and closer analysis shows that children made good progress from their starting points.

Alongside governors, you set clear priorities for further improvement. You are not complacent and recognise that while standards are high, they can be improved further for some groups of pupils. Individual pupils' progress is tracked, and swift actions are taken to support pupils who are falling behind. As a result, most pupils make good progress from their starting points in a range of subjects. However, you recognise that too few of the most able pupils make the progress necessary for them to achieve the higher standards in reading and in mathematics at the end of key stage 2.

Governors have a wide variety of skills, which they use both to support and

challenge the headteacher. They have high expectations and want the school to be the 'best that it can be'. They receive good-quality information from you, and use this, plus first-hand experience of the school, to good effect.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They feel involved, and particularly enjoy the opportunities they are given to attend school events. Parents speak of the 'family feel', and one said, 'Children feel safe, secure and cared for as individuals.'

Pupils behave well at all times. They are polite and well-mannered, and show high levels of respect for adults and for one another. They were happy to talk and to share their work with me. Pupils know how to stay safe, including while online, and they are taught how to make the right choices. They say that there has been some bullying in the past but it was dealt with quickly by the teachers. Pupils have a good understanding of British values and other faiths. They are prepared well for life in modern Britain but this would be enhanced through more opportunities to learn about other cultures in Britain and the wider world. You acknowledge that this is an area which needs to develop further.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Your governors ensure that all policies and procedures are in place, including checks on teachers and governors. Training for staff is comprehensive and up to date. The policies and procedures around safeguarding are clear and known to all staff. Staff know what to look for and who they would go to with concerns. You demonstrate a great determination to ensure that pupils are kept safe, and any unknown absences are followed up swiftly. Consequently, all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and records are detailed and of a high quality.

### **Inspection findings**

- Pupils benefit from good teaching at all levels. Your staff use their good subject knowledge to ensure that teaching is matched well to pupils' needs. Consequently, most pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points. Teaching excites a love of learning, and teachers' skilful use of questioning enables pupils to deepen their understanding.
- Pupils are attentive in lessons and ask their teachers questions to extend their learning. Teachers follow up on these questions and give your pupils a chance to find the answers.
- Pupils read fluently and with expression. They say that they enjoy reading and that they are encouraged to read at home and at school.
- A key line of enquiry for this inspection was the progress that the most able pupils make during their time in key stage 2. Although a greater proportion of the most able pupils are now on track to reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics, around a third of the most able pupils are still not making the necessary progress to reach these higher standards.

- In Year 2, pupils, including boys, read demanding texts and answer questions which require them to think about reasons for actions and characters' responses. This prepares them well for key stage 2. However, in key stage 2, comprehension activities provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to read beyond the text. As a result, the most able pupils do not reach the higher standards of which they are capable.
- Reasoning and investigation in mathematics are given a high priority. Pupils respond to the greater challenges which this presents with enthusiasm and enjoyment. As a result, they are developing a deeper understanding of mathematics. Your most-able pupils are challenged to make links between different areas of their learning. For example, when carrying out a mathematical investigation into the area of a circle, pupils in Year 5 and 6 were challenged to work out their own way of recording this and then to write up the investigation using skills taught in English.
- The strong progress in reasoning and investigating in mathematics is not replicated in the progress seen in calculations. This is because pupils' work is sometimes too easy, and pupils complete full pages of correct calculations without the opportunity to apply this knowledge to problems. As a result, the most able pupils do not reach the higher standards of which they are capable.
- Another line of enquiry was focused on the progress children make in the Reception class. Your staff provide an environment which is rich in words and gives children opportunities to experiment with language. This, along with adults' skilful questioning, enables children to develop good language skills. This was evident from the two boys who were playing imaginatively with a set of toy dragons. One asked me if I knew that 'baby dragons can't fly'. He then carefully explained how the dragons would learn from their parents and used the dragons to demonstrate this.
- Activities to promote mathematical understanding are exciting and incorporate additional opportunities to read. Due to good teaching, children make rapid progress with phonics and are able to use this to support their reading. Work on display shows that the most able write in complete sentences with good letter formation. Children demonstrate a real excitement for learning as a result of the carefully planned curriculum and stimulating environment which your staff provide.
- Adults working in the early years know the children well and understand the needs of each of them. This means that you are able to act swiftly to put additional support in place when needed. As a result, children who start school with skills below those typical for their age make rapid progress to catch up with their peers. Children in the early years get a good start to their education and are prepared well for the demands of Year 1.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils make accelerated progress in reading and mathematics by:

- improving comprehension skills so that pupils gain a deeper understanding of what they have read
  - enabling pupils to use and apply their calculation skills as soon as they have understood them
- pupils are given more opportunities to develop their understanding of British and wider world cultures.

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

Yours sincerely

Tanya Hughes  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this short inspection, I met with you, teachers and governors. I spoke to a representative of the local authority. You and I visited classes to observe learning, and I looked at work in pupils' books. I met with pupils throughout the day, and spoke with four parents in the playground before school. I considered the 30 responses and the 29 'free text' comments made by parents on Parent View. I also considered the seven pupil and six staff responses to the online questionnaires. I heard several pupils read, and observed pupils on the playground and in the dining hall. I conducted a detailed review of safeguarding, including checking on the school's policies, procedures and record keeping. I talked to you, other staff, and governors about how the school ensures that children are kept safe. I also considered a range of other documentation, including school improvement planning and information about pupils' progress and attainment.