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Miss Kathleen Halliday  
Headteacher  
Morpeth All Saints Church of England Aided First School  
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Dear Miss Halliday

### **Short inspection of Morpeth All Saints Church of England Aided First School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 March 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 November 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

The school's motto of 'Learning through love and laughter' permeates all of its work. Pupils enjoy school. They are challenged increasingly well by the work their teachers provide and flourish in the nurturing environment which is underpinned by strong Christian values. Pupils report that there are very few incidents of poor behaviour, including bullying. They appreciate the friendship bus stop in the playground. Pupils keep an eye on it just in case one of their peers feels lonely and needs a 'pick up'.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of your work. They value the nurturing ethos of the school together with the way in which individual pupils' talents are recognised and developed. Many who responded to Ofsted's survey of parental views echoed such comments as, 'We have seen our daughter thrive and learn with true enthusiasm and enjoyment.'

You have established a community of professionals in which coaching and mentoring is valued highly. Staff at all levels are supported well in their efforts to improve their knowledge and expertise further through attending high-quality training and studying for a range of additional and appropriate professional

qualifications. For example, the school business manager ensures that the school's website fully meets current requirements. Staff morale is high.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have kept the quality of teaching and learning under constant review. You have taken effective and timely action to address identified shortcomings. As a result, teaching has improved and pupils' outcomes at the end of the early years, key stage 1 and Year 4 have risen year on year.

In response to 'assessment without levels', leaders, working within a partnership of schools, have established sound systems to track pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics. You acknowledge the need to develop these assessment systems further to include non-core subjects such as modern foreign languages, geography and music.

Leaders, including governors, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. There is a joint determination to ensure that boys and the most able pupils, both of whom are making more progress than at the time of the previous inspection, achieve even better progress from their starting points.

Governors, who possess and use a wide range of skills most effectively, challenge and support you well. They carry out focused visits to check on the impact of actions outlined in the school's improvement planning. Lines of communication are clear and expectations are high.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

The school's record of staff recruitment checks is fully compliant with requirements. Staff and governors have a comprehensive knowledge of how to keep children safe in education. You, in your role as the school's designated person for child protection, make appropriate and timely referrals where necessary to the local authority's designated officer and to children's services.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in school, at home and online. They enjoy and benefit from online safety themed weeks. You ensure that parents are informed well about online safety, including 'sexting', through visits from the local authority's child exploitation and online protection ambassador and safety consultant. In addition, parents and pupils have access to the school's website which includes a great deal of information about safeguarding and hyperlinks to relevant websites.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate. Their planning for further school improvement covers appropriate areas for development. However, school improvement planning lacks ambitious targets against which governors

and senior leaders can evaluate the progress made by the school at points during the academic year.

- The school has developed increasingly robust systems to measure pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's improvement partner, from the local authority, has identified the need to develop these systems further in relation to non-core subjects as a next step in further school improvement.
- The majority of children in the early years enter the school with skills and abilities that are at least typical for their age. The school's assessment information indicates that the proportion of children, including the most able children, who are working at levels typical for their age in reading, writing and mathematics has increased markedly since the beginning of the school year.
- Improvements made in the standards reached by boys at the end of the early years in 2015 were not sustained in 2016. You recognise that the progress made by some boys in the early years lags behind the progress made by girls and have made this, quite correctly, a focused area for continued school improvement.
- Governors have made very effective provision to evaluate the rate of improvement in the early years through the recruitment of an early years education adviser who works in a neighbouring local authority. The governing body's skill set, in the particular area of the early years, is much improved.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for support through the government's pupil premium, is significantly below average. These pupils make rapid progress from their individual starting points. All, by the end of Year 4, reach at least age-related expectations over time. Leaders evaluate the impact of this funding meticulously. For example, leaders know the impact of small group 'precision teaching' because they measure the progress made by individual pupils from a baseline assessment at the beginning of each series of intervention lessons. Leaders, including the school business manager, have taken assertive action to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' attendance is much improved and well above the national average for non-disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1 and Years 3 and 4. Data in the school's assessment tracking system shows that the proportion of pupils, in all year groups, working at age-related expectations and above increases as the cohorts progress through the school. You, again quite correctly, identified that the proportion of the most able pupils working at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics, although high, is not high enough from their individual starting points. This is a key area in the school's current improvement planning.
- Pupils' skills in handwriting across the school require further development. The oldest pupils, those highly capable pupils in Year 4, do not join their letters as a matter of course. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of this area of the pupils' work.
- The vast majority of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make rapid progress from their starting points because of the bespoke input

provided by the school. The coordinator for special educational needs (SENCo) is proactive in seeking advice and support to improve the provision for individual pupils further. The SENCo has already acted upon a very recent external audit of the school's provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to arrange specific termly consultations with the parents and carers. These specific consultations are in addition to the school's routine consultations that happen on a termly basis.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans for further school improvement include targets by which pupils' progress can be evaluated at specified points during the academic year
- the systems and procedures to track pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics are extended to include non-core subjects
- the provision for boys and the most able pupils is improved further
- pupils are taught and use a neat, joined handwriting script.

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

Yours sincerely

Belita Scott  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you, the deputy headteacher, the SENCo, the school's improvement partner, the diocesan director of education and four governors, including the chair of the governing body. You and I examined information about pupils' achievement. I checked a range of documentation including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, external evaluations of aspects of the school's work and minutes of meetings of the governing body. I considered 78 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, the school's recent survey of parental views and a letter received from a parent. In addition, I talked with a number of parents who were waiting to pick their children up at the end of the school day. I also took account of 21 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff. You, the deputy headteacher and I visited classes to observe teaching, learning and assessment. I checked the progress made by pupils in their workbooks, talked formally to a group of six pupils and talked more informally to pupils in lessons about their learning. I also listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read.