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21 April 2017

Mr David Smith  
Headteacher  
Read St John's CofE Primary School  
Straits Lane  
Read  
Burnley  
Lancashire  
BB12 7PE

Dear Mr Smith

### **Short inspection of Read St John's CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 22 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 September 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 have a clear vision for improvement, and high expectations of staff and pupils. Staff and governors share your high expectations and drive to provide the best education for pupils. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy the greater challenge they now receive in their work, particularly in key stage 2 in mathematics. Pupils say that they feel safe and enjoy school because teachers make learning exciting and fun. Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying and those spoken with found it difficult to recollect any incidents in school. They were, however, confident that teachers would swiftly resolve any concerns or issues they might have.

You have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, which you use well to identify the correct priorities for improvement. These include the need to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, increasing the proportions of pupils attaining higher standards, particularly in key stage 1, and the importance of governors ensuring that the school's website is up to date. You have successfully addressed the two areas for development identified at the last inspection.

The quality of teaching has improved. Teachers have a secure understanding of the new national curriculum and strategies of how to teach it effectively because they have received effective training, particularly in mathematics, reading and writing.

Teachers use questioning well and systematically develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. As a result, pupils' outcomes have improved, particularly in writing, which was identified as an area for improvement at the last inspection.

The progress pupils make from their starting points in writing has shown sustained improvement since the last inspection. Nearly all pupils now attain the expected standard in writing by the time they leave school, while the proportion of pupils attaining greater depth at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 was well above the national average. However, the proportion of pupils attaining the highest standards in national assessments at the end of key stage 1 was not as high.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and are followed meticulously. Statutory checks are carried out on the suitability of staff to work with children. Appropriate training ensures that staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding and are vigilant about the potential risks that pupils may face. Leaders keep detailed high-quality records and systems are in place to share information with appropriate authorities effectively to ensure pupils' safety.

Governors have ensured that appropriate monitoring and filtering arrangements are in place for the school's internet connection: highly effective reporting systems inform leaders quickly of any attempted misuse.

### **Inspection findings**

- Governors effectively monitor the work of the school. Governors use their professional skills well and ask searching questions to check the effectiveness of leaders' actions. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weakness of the school because of the quality of information they receive from leaders and from their frequent visits to the school to check the impact of leaders' actions.
- You have a good understanding of the strengths and weakness of the school because of your improved monitoring. You and your subject leaders undertake regular scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work in books to check that their actions are having the desired impact. You frequently meet with staff to discuss and hold them to account for pupils' progress.
- Regular newsletters, text messaging and the school's website keep parents up to date with the life of school. However, governors have not ensured that the school's website is up to date with all the required information. This includes some details about the curriculum and aspects of school's strategy for its use of the pupil premium grant. Governors are aware of these omissions and have taken appropriate actions to address them. This includes the nomination of a governor to be responsible for regular website audits.
- Published assessment data shows that the very small numbers of disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well other pupils nationally. However, work in pupils' books and the school's own assessments show that disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving and that they now make good progress from their starting points,

particularly in writing and mathematics. You have a secure understanding of the barriers to learning posed to pupils and make effective use of pupil premium to implement appropriate and effective strategies that helps them succeed. Actions not only help disadvantaged pupils catch up but also help the most able disadvantaged deepen their knowledge and understanding in the subjects in which they show high levels of skill. One example is the provision of additional instrumental lessons for disadvantaged pupils with particular interests and skills in music.

- You were pleased at the progress that pupils made from their starting points in end of key stage 2 writing assessments, which was well above the national average. Work in pupils' books shows that these standards are being sustained and that pupils develop a good command of vocabulary to enliven their writing. In a review of a play, for example, a pupil wrote about, 'The deliciously evil wicked witches of the west' and explained how the quality of acting had clearly illustrated their 'devious plans'. However, you recognise that further work is needed to ensure that more pupils, particularly in key stage, 1 make the progress required to reach the highest standards.
- The leadership of English and mathematics is strong. Leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects clearly, because of their rigorous monitoring. They contribute effectively to the school development plan and their actions have improved the quality of teaching and consequently pupils' outcomes.
- You have improved the quality of teaching since the last inspection by ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants are well trained and up to date in their knowledge of the new curriculum and strategies about how to teach it effectively. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, particularly in key stage 2. They use questioning well to check understanding and amend their teaching to address any misconceptions. Teachers and teaching assistants often seize opportunities to get pupils to deepen their knowledge and apply skills by asking them to explain the reasons for their answers. This aspect of teaching is stronger in key stage 2 than in key stage 1.
- Reading, writing and mathematics skills are taught systematically. Teachers make effective use of links to other subjects to develop pupils' understanding. However, on some occasions, particularly in key stage 1, most-able pupils have fewer opportunities to study at greater depth and apply their skills to more-challenging tasks.
- Attendance overall is good in the school, with most pupils rarely missing a day of education. However, you are aware that some disadvantaged pupils do not attend as well as other pupils. In 2016, disadvantaged pupils' attendance was below the national average and the proportion of this group who were persistently absent was high. You have taken some effective actions that have resulted in improvement to the attendance of this group of pupils. These actions include the use of formal warning letters, meetings with the parents of pupils who do not attend often enough and the celebration and reward of good attendance. However, you recognise more work still needs to be done to ensure that some disadvantaged pupils improve their attendance further.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a greater proportion of pupils reach the highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in key stage 1
- attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils rise and fewer disadvantaged pupils are persistently absent
- governors keep the school's website up to date with the required information.

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

John Nixon  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the subject leaders for mathematics and English, your special educational needs coordinator, teaching staff and governors, including the chair of the governing body. I met with the local authority adviser who works with the school. I spoke with pupils during lessons and around the school. I took account of the information contained within the responses to the online questionnaires for parents (Parent View) and staff. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.

I visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning, looked at their work in books and listened to some pupils read. I reviewed information about pupils' progress, attainment and attendance. I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation document, action plans and other policies. I looked at safeguarding, including evaluating the impact of the school's procedures and policies to keep children safe, recruitment checks and record-keeping.