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Mrs Carol Abel
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Abel

Short inspection of Ormskirk Lathom Park Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Ormskirk Lathom Park is a safe, happy and friendly school where pupils achieve well and develop in confidence.

The continuing success of the school is the result of the strong leadership you have given since joining the school three years ago, the good-quality teaching and the high levels of knowledge that staff have about the pupils. It is clear that your team of committed staff and governors share your vision for the school. Consequently, the underlying culture of the school, lived out day by day, is one of support and challenge in order to provide the best opportunities for pupils to succeed in their learning and personal development. It is little wonder that all who spoke to me expressed high levels of confidence in your leadership. You have relished the challenge of being headteacher here and at Downholland Haskayne CE Primary School and have made full use of the opportunities this brings.

During my visit, I focused on the progress the school had made since the previous inspection. This progress has been good and demonstrates leaders' strong capacity to improve the school further. There are now greater opportunities for pupils to read widely from books in the library and from other sources in different subjects. Pupils' love of reading is palpable: those who read to me did so with faces lit up. They read with fluency and expression, taking note of key punctuation. Importantly, they read with understanding and could explain the meaning of words read. Furthermore,

pupils now write at length in subjects other than English. Younger pupils, for example, write interesting sentences explaining why vegetables are healthy while older pupils report the need for rules in the context of those found in the Bible and the story of Aladdin. However, you want to achieve still more for pupils. We agreed that even more opportunities could be given to allow pupils to explain their thinking and reasoning, both orally and in writing in mathematics and science.

Safeguarding is effective.

A strong culture of safeguarding permeates the school. You have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Training for staff is up to date and takes into account the requirements of 'Keeping children safe in education 2016'. Consequently, staff know what to do if they have any concerns.

All pupils spoken to and all who responded to the inspection question are clear that they are safe in school: so much so, that they see the school as a close-knit family. All are adamant that there is no bullying or racist or homophobic name-calling. Older pupils, for example, know how the word 'gay' can be used in a derogatory way but prefer to use it, and are encouraged by their teachers to do so, as a descriptor for being happy and joyful. Furthermore, pupils behave well and are considerate of others, as demonstrated by older pupils looking after younger ones.

Pupils are also kept safe through the promotion of good health and hygiene. Younger pupils, for example, not only learn how to wash their hands, but also carry out experiments to test out how germs spread.

Inspection findings

- Pupil numbers, while growing, are very small, with some year groups having just one pupil, so published information about pupil performance needs to be treated with extreme caution. Nevertheless, this information shows that, over time, pupils at Ormskirk Lathom Park achieve at least as well as their peers nationally in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of the early years foundation stage, in Year 1 phonics assessments, and at the end of key stages 1 and 2.
- Children currently at the school are making good progress in their learning across the curriculum, regardless of gender, disadvantage or special educational needs and/or disabilities. During the inspection we observed together children and pupils clearly enjoying their learning and confidently talking to others about it. Early years children very much enjoyed creating their own challenge course in the garden area, using crates and planks to make a safe walkway. Pupils in key stage 1 articulated well how cars are useful to get around but can sometimes cause pollution. During this learning, pupils were encouraged to think about the meaning of words used. Consequently, all pupils were able to explain what pollution was. Older pupils in key stage 2 learned successfully to argue and write from different viewpoints. Work and photographic evidence from pupils' books and whole-school topic folders shows such learning to be typical.
- Also typical is the way that pupils are learning to edit and redraft their writing by

means of the 'Green Write' (specific writing tasks completed on green paper and used as a form of assessment). The standard of writing produced is good and highlights pupils' increased confidence in using, for example, pronouns, expanded noun phrases and different types of clauses.

- Teachers and supporting adults use questioning well to draw out of pupils increasingly detailed and considered responses. We agreed that there was scope for greater opportunities for pupils to explain and record their thinking in science and mathematics.
- Pupils respond well to the comments adults make about their work. Spellings are corrected and repeated errors are increasingly rare. We agreed, though, there are occasions when the usual high standards expected of pupils in the presentation of their work are not applied as consistently as you wish. When teachers do not apply the high standards of presentation which you have set out, errors are more likely to occur in pupils' written work.
- The prevailing positive ethos of the school encourages pupils to learn, get on with each other and show high levels of respect. The school environment, both inside and out, is used to good effect and is bright and welcoming. The curriculum is broad and balanced and makes good use of education visits, to Conwy in North Wales for example, visitors such as local military personnel, and a range of after-school clubs. Pupils also enjoy mixing with peers from other schools, including those from Downholland Haskayne CE Primary School, in sporting activities. As a result of provision you and your team have put into place, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including their sense of fairness and demonstration of British values, are strong.
- Wisely, you are making good use of the links with Downholland Haskayne CE Primary School to ensure that your staff receive appropriate training linked well to the school's priorities. Consequently, your staff team is able to share ideas and learn from others.
- Your governors are highly committed to the school. Their faith in you is absolute; nevertheless, they do not hesitate to ask questions to develop their own understanding of the school and its effectiveness. They appreciate the training opportunities afforded to them, particularly through online courses. They have recognised the need to meet more regularly with governors of other schools and have plans in place to do this. The school's website meets requirements.
- You know the school well. Self-evaluation is accurate and targets for future development – the securing of even better outcomes through routinely outstanding teaching – are most appropriate. Your work to date, along with that of your staff and governors, is ensuring that pupils are getting a good deal by attending Ormskirk Lathom Park School.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils have greater opportunities to explain their thinking and reasoning, both orally and in writing, in science and mathematics

- the increasingly high standards of presentation evident in pupils' work becomes a consistent feature so that errors are minimised and best work always promoted.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Williams
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection I met with you, your staff, three parents and seven members of the governing body. I was also able to speak to a representative of the local authority. Together, you and I visited both classes to observe learning and look at work in pupils' books and folders. I met with pupils throughout the day and spoke with four more formally, listening to them read. I took into account four free-text comments made by parents, eight responses to the online staff questionnaire and 15 responses to the pupil questionnaire. There were too few responses on Parent View for me to take them into consideration.

I scrutinised a range of documentation, including that relating to assessment information, school improvement planning, behaviour, the school's own questionnaires to parents, the single central record and other safeguarding procedures and practices.

I considered in detail a number of questions:

- How well do current children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2:
 - develop key skills in reading, writing and mathematics and how well are they applying them across the curriculum and
 - achieve across the curriculum, developing knowledge, skills and understanding as appropriate?
- How well do different groups of pupils achieve in their learning and personal development, particularly:
 - those for whom the pupil premium funding is intended and
 - boys, considering the historically greater number of girls?
- Is safeguarding effective? Does a strong culture of safeguarding permeate the school?
- Given the small size of the school, how do leaders and governors ensure the professional development of staff?
- Is the website meeting requirements?