

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



26 April 2017

Mrs Lynn Hill  
Headteacher  
St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School  
Boothroyd Lane  
Dewsbury  
West Yorkshire  
WF13 2LP

Dear Mrs Hill

### **Short inspection of St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 30 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 March 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 created a calm, welcoming ethos where staff support you very well in securing good outcomes for pupils. Parents agree that their children flourish in the very positive culture you have developed.

At the previous inspection, you were challenged to raise attainment for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You have made sure that the additional government funding for these pupils is used very well. There is strong additional support for these pupils to make good progress. You, and other leaders, check the work of these pupils very carefully and pinpoint what is required to make sure they learn well. Teachers take account of the needs of these pupils in their planning and support them well in their learning. As a result, standards are increasing for these pupils along with others. Very occasionally, teachers do not check the work of the lower-ability pupils swiftly enough and this can lead to variable progress at times.

I was keen to find out how you were ensuring that teaching was consistently at its best as this was another area for improvement identified at the previous inspection. You, and your assistant headteachers, check teaching very carefully. You have identified good practice in school and made sure staff see it and adopt this strong practice. Staff are clear about your high expectations and are responding well to your advice and guidance. Your early years leader has made sure that children

receive high-quality provision as she guides and supports her staff exceptionally well. In the early years, there is excellent provision to help children write well and link letters and sounds to spell accurately. In key stage 1, there is some variability in writing as English grammar, punctuation and spelling are not checked meticulously by teachers. Pupils are not consistently encouraged to redraft and improve their work.

As requested at the previous inspection, your governors have clearly strengthened their understanding of national performance information. You have provided training sessions for them in how to interpret the information. Some governors are highly skilled in analysing information and you are challenged and supported very effectively to make sure the school continues to be good and improves. Governors are holding you and other leaders to account well for the work you do.

More recently, you have focused on strengthening the quality of handwriting and introducing more challenging problems in mathematics. I found that the additional focus on handwriting, and writing at length, is helping pupils to present their work well and to produce more high-quality writing. Your leader of mathematics has sought out good practice from other schools and used the findings to strengthen problem solving and mathematical reasoning. Pupils' work has improved quickly because staff have taken on the good advice and training from the subject leader. There is a good range of challenging tasks for pupils to solve and to think deeply about. However, pupils are not engaging with these tasks quickly enough and are spending too much time on work with which they are already confident. This limits the additional challenge that is required to make sure pupils reach the very highest standards.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your leadership team have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have made sure that pupils, especially the most vulnerable, are well cared for. The school works closely and very effectively with parents and external agencies in the local authority to make sure children's needs are met. You are tenacious in making sure that children are kept safe and external agencies respond appropriately to your requests. Safeguarding records are of high quality and clearly indicate the school's commitment to keep all pupils safe. You provide a safeguarding pamphlet to all visitors and make sure they know its contents and report any concerns to you or another senior safeguarding leader. Parents and staff are unanimous in saying that children are well cared for and safe at school.

Child protection training for staff means they are knowledgeable and up to date in terms of the most recent guidance and legislation. They are vigilant and know what to do should they have any concerns about children's welfare. Governors make sure that all adults on the school site are checked to confirm they are fit to work with children and the school's central register is well kept.

## Inspection findings

- Your analysis of the school's work is accurate and you have used it well to strengthen teaching and outcomes across the school. Staff quickly take on board the good support and advice you and other leaders provide. Staff morale is high and contributing well to good outcomes.
- Pupils are pleasant, tolerant and respectful. You have created a harmonious community where children get on well together. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developing exceptionally well. Pupils enjoy school and are very active. I saw children in the early years enjoying physical exercise in the school hall and, at lunchtime, I saw the rest of the school taking part in well-organised games and activities that contribute well to their health and fitness.
- The quality of teaching is generally of a high standard and especially so in the early years. Interesting tasks are set for pupils and are planned to meet the needs and abilities of pupils. Pupils are inspired by the good level of praise they receive and the rewards for good work and behaviour. However, in key stage 1, there is a touch of variability in teaching and, at times, questioning is not used well enough to check pupils' understanding of what is being learned. Also, challenging tasks are not tackled swiftly in mathematics, especially by the most able.
- Attendance is improving and is currently broadly average. You have paid for additional support to make sure children attend school regularly. This is working well and there have been strong improvements in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Your early morning 'rise and shine' club and breakfast club promote a good start to the day. Regular attendance is contributing well to pupils' improving attainment.
- Early years provision is a strength of the school. Year on year, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has increased. Children currently in the early years are making good progress. Girls achieve very well and targeted support for boys' reading and writing is helping them to achieve equally as well as the girls. A significant proportion of children are on track to exceed some of the early learning goals. Your early years leader has made sure the environment is highly stimulating and children are exceptionally well motivated to learn. She works closely with many Nursery providers and this is helping to strengthen children's skills, knowledge and understanding on entry to your Reception classes.
- Parents have great confidence in the work you are doing for their children. The large majority support their children's work at home. You have provided training and information about how they can help their children learn. Consequently, many more children are reading regularly at home and enjoying reading.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that teachers:

- have consistently high expectations and meticulously check pupils' English grammar, punctuation and spelling to strengthen pupils' writing
- make sure pupils check and edit their written work to make sure it is of the highest standard
- expect pupils, especially the most able pupils, to tackle the most challenging work swiftly
- check the work of lower-ability pupils very carefully in class to strengthen progress even further.

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

Yours sincerely

James McGrath  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met regularly with you as part of a professional dialogue throughout the day. I also met with three members of the governing body. I held a meeting with a representative of the local authority. I conducted an analysis of pupils' work with you and two assistant headteachers. I observed a range of teaching, listened to pupils reading in class, and spoke to pupils throughout the day about their safety and learning in school. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I analysed 17 staff questionnaires along with five pupil responses to the online questionnaire. I looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development and improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of governing body meetings. I considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection and safeguarding.