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Mr B Holmes
Headteacher
Chorley St Peter's Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mr Holmes

Short inspection of Chorley St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 September 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. The school's Christian values are at the heart of all that you do. Your strong leadership has established a caring and calm ethos throughout the school. You have created an environment that has the well-being of pupils and staff at its core. Staff morale is high and pupils are happy. As one member of staff commented, 'The leadership team, and especially the headteacher, look after our well-being and continuously offer support when needed.'

This is a truly inclusive school where all pupils are valued as individuals. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are welcomed. Their individual needs are met well and they receive targeted support. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are extremely polite and well mannered. They listen attentively, respect other people's ideas and their attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils talk proudly about the teachers being the best thing about the school. The vast majority of pupils have good attendance. However, you recognise the need to work closely with parents to reduce the regular absence of some disadvantaged pupils and some of those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Since the previous inspection, you have been appointed to the role of headteacher. You wasted no time in establishing a new leadership structure which has enabled you to implement improvements across the school. It was evident during the inspection that the leadership team and governors share your ambitions for the future. Leaders and governors know the school well and have a good grasp of the

school's strengths and areas for improvement. Together, you have put in place well-focused plans to bring about rapid improvements. Your rigorous and detailed checking of pupils' progress ensures that pupils who may need extra support are identified quickly. Targeted and structured activities ensure that pupils quickly catch up. You recognised that, for many of your pupils, it was often their self-confidence which prevented them from achieving their best. Strong and trusting relationships between pupils and staff have ensured that there is an ethos of risk-taking in pupils' learning. The actions that you have taken mean that pupils now enjoy challenging themselves. The work in pupils' books shows many examples of pupils learning from their mistakes and having opportunities to challenge themselves further.

The school is at the heart of the community and is highly regarded by parents. This was most evident when parents and the local community pulled together to fundraise after the school was broken into. Resources which were stolen from the school were replaced through this community project. A typical parental comment was, 'As a parent of a child at St Peter's you are part of a community that helps each other and pulls together.' Parents who spoke to me and those who responded to Parent View are very positive about the school. The overwhelming opinion from parents is that the school does everything it can to develop pupils emotionally and academically. Another comment was, 'St Peter's is a loving and caring school. My children have made excellent progress in their learning and their wider skills.'

You have responded effectively to the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. One of the aspects that you were asked to improve was pupils' attainment in reading and writing, so that it was as strong as that in mathematics. Over the last few years this has been achieved. Pupils now make similar progress in all subjects and by the end of key stage 2 their progress is in line with national expectations. A strength of the school has been the progress that pupils make in their writing in key stage 2. This has been consistently strong and above the national average. You spoke passionately about wanting to ensure that all pupils excel at your school. You agreed that, although achievement had risen in key stage 1, this needs to improve further in writing, especially for disadvantaged pupils.

The previous inspection also identified that you needed to improve the quality of teaching so that teaching is either good or better. I observed teaching and learning across the school, with a particular emphasis on the early years and key stage 1. Pupils were enjoying their learning. They were involved in high-quality discussions. Teachers and teaching assistants guided pupils to challenge themselves. They also supported pupils in their learning by asking probing questions. My review of pupils' assessments and checks on pupils' work show that they are provided with many exciting and engaging opportunities to write from first-hand experiences. Additionally, feedback given to pupils enables them to quickly address misconceptions in their learning. Feedback is also successful in challenging pupils further, thus deepening their learning. This was most evident in the teaching of mathematics. The information provided by leaders and in pupils' work shows that teaching is good across the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose and staff and governors receive appropriate training. Staff take their roles and responsibilities seriously and alert leaders to any concerns that they have. As the designated safeguarding lead, you are proactive and tenacious in following up any concerns about pupils' safety. You work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe. Those who are responsible for staff recruitment have completed training at the appropriate level. Vetting procedures for the recruitment of staff and governors are thorough.

Pupils say that they feel safe and that teachers keep them safe. Pupils are confident to talk to staff and visitors. They explain in detail how to stay safe when using the internet or social media. All of the pupils I spoke with said that bullying was rare. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying and were all in agreement that, if they had any concerns, any member of staff would help them. Parents with whom I spoke, as well as those who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, felt that their children were safe and happy. A typical parental comment was, 'St Peter's is a loving and caring school.'

Inspection findings

- At the start of this inspection we agreed on a number of key lines of enquiry. The first of these looked at how effectively leaders are improving outcomes for the most able pupils in reading and mathematics in key stage 1. This was because in previous years the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher standard was below the national average.
- A new approach to the teaching of reading is enabling pupils to develop their reading comprehension skills in a more structured way. Teachers choose books that will appeal to boys and girls. This is helping to strengthen pupils' achievement in reading.
- In mathematics, the changes made to teaching and learning are enabling pupils to reach the highest standard. In pupils' books it was evident that they have many opportunities to challenge themselves through problem-solving and reasoning. Pupils are keen to learn and engage well in their learning. The pupils with whom I spoke told me that they now thought mathematics was the best subject in school. As one pupil informed me, 'Teachers are better at teaching maths now, they make it fun.'
- Leaders regularly evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. You use this information to ensure that teachers and teaching assistants receive relevant training and targeted support. Teaching has improved because of these actions.
- The improvements made to teaching and learning in reading and mathematics in key stage 1 have ensured that achievement at the highest standard improved in 2017. Despite these improvements, we agreed that achievement for the most able disadvantaged pupils needed to improve further in both subjects.

- The second line of enquiry considered the progress that disadvantaged pupils were making in their writing in the early years and key stage 1. This is because in previous years too few disadvantaged pupils did as well as other pupils nationally. Leaders have established new systems to tackle this. The leader with responsibility for the provision for disadvantaged pupils, together with teachers, has identified the barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged pupils. There are regular meetings where pupils' progress is analysed and additional support is quickly implemented. Your most recent information shows that the difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils is diminishing. Work in pupils' books also confirms this to be the case. Writing outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in the early years are now in line with the national average. However, in key stage 1, you acknowledged that, although achievement is rising, there is still more to do.
- Another key line of enquiry considered the attendance and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This was because in 2016, persistent absence was high for these groups of pupils.
- You have established effective systems to check pupils' attendance. You know the reasons why every pupil is absent from school and you are working to remove the barriers that some pupils may face. If there are concerns, you take action to provide support to families. You work closely with external agencies when necessary, including the use of fines for some families.
- Individual case studies show that, as a result of your actions, the attendance of some pupils has improved significantly. However, despite concerted efforts to reduce persistent absence, it is still high for these groups of pupils. You recognise that there is more to be done so that all pupils, no matter what their circumstances, attend as regularly as possible.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they work closely with parents to reduce the persistent absence of some disadvantaged pupils and some of those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 and other pupils of similar age nationally continues to diminish, especially at the highest levels.

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

Julie Kynaston
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the acting deputy headteacher and a group of your middle leaders. I also met with the business manager and family support worker. I spoke with members of the governing body and a group of pupils. I heard pupils read. I spoke with an officer from the local authority and parents during the day. Documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation document, the school's improvement plan, external audits, attendance information and safeguarding checks. I reviewed pupils' achievement records and your checks on the quality of teaching. Also, I visited lessons with you to speak with pupils. I looked at examples of pupils' work and observed their behaviour during lessons and as they moved around school. I examined child protection information and minutes from meetings of the governing body. I took account of the 32 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 31 free-text responses, and five responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. I also undertook a review of the school's website.