

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



11 December 2017

Mrs Rowena Thompson  
Headteacher  
Stickney Church of England Primary School  
Main Road  
Stickney  
Boston  
Lincolnshire  
PE22 8AX

Dear Mrs Thompson

### **Short inspection of Stickney Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 November 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 February 2013.

#### **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 and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders, staff and governors know and understand these well. They share your high aspirations for all pupils. You work together effectively to improve continually the quality of education for pupils. You lead by example and are determined to improve further the quality of teaching and learning at the school.

You and the school's highly committed team of staff provide a warm and caring environment. Teachers know the pupils well. They use their skills and expertise to provide vibrant learning opportunities for all pupils. They often hold purposeful conversations about the quality of teaching and learning. They constantly reflect on the quality of provision and adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs.

Pupils spoke proudly about their school and the range of experiences they have. One pupil said that he enjoyed the theatre visits. Other pupils spoke enthusiastically about the sporting opportunities they have far and wide.

The school emanates warmth and provides a nurturing environment where all pupils can thrive. For example, you develop pupils' leadership skills through a range of opportunities, which includes the elected school council, e-cadets and sports ambassadors and school prefects.

The e-cadets pride themselves on delivering key safety messages to their classes so that all pupils are aware of how to keep safe online. One pupil spoke in detail about the importance of having appropriate privacy settings on social media accounts.

Since the previous inspection, you have addressed effectively the areas for improvement. Pupils have a range of opportunities where they are able to share their success with their classmates and work independently. Teachers ensure that pupils have a range of 'toolkits' in place to support them in class so they can work independently. For example, in mathematics lessons, pupils are able to use mathematics toolkits which provide them with opportunities to talk through their mathematical reasoning when problem solving. This has enabled pupils to develop their independence skills when working by themselves or in small groups.

In English, you have developed opportunities for pupils to self- and peer-assess their own work. A clear framework has been put in place to develop pupils' skills to evaluate their work effectively. For example, pupils in a Year 5 class were able to confidently provide a brief overview of information to their classmates about the planets and their unique features. They had opportunities to make notes and improve their work. This means that pupils have opportunities to reflect and improve their writing skills over time.

You have effectively developed opportunities for staff to develop their skills through sharing expertise and knowledge. For example, teaching assistants have been involved in a project to develop their skills so they are able to work alongside class teachers to support effectively pupils' learning. You have also established strong links with a local cluster of schools where staff are able to visit other schools to observe effective practice. You use resourcefully links with your federated school to share proven methods of teaching and learning and build upon your team's expertise through joint training and checking on the quality of pupils' work.

The progress of different groups of children is tracked carefully by class teachers and staff in early years. You and your staff have developed a tracking tool to enable teachers to assess carefully pupils' progress on a daily basis. Teachers use this information to adapt pupils' learning tasks so they are able to make accelerated progress in phonics, mathematics and English.

Leaders are tracking more precisely the progress made towards meeting targets identified in improvement planning. Leaders monitor and evaluate regularly the teaching and learning provision in their areas of responsibility. They have detailed action plans in place which are updated frequently. This information is also shared with governors so they have an overview of the quality of provision in the school.

You recognise that the school's focus is upon accelerating pupils' progress in writing, especially at the end of key stage 1, so a greater proportion of pupils achieve the higher standard. You and your leaders recognise that there is still more work to be done to ensure that progress in writing matches the well-above-average progress in mathematics by the end of key stage 2. You are already addressing this through the introduction of a new self-assessment tool.

Pupils who spoke with me explained that they are able to measure their success in writing through using this tool. It provides them with a clear structure to make improvements. You recognise that more time is needed to enhance the new self-assessment tool, so teachers set tasks to challenge the most able pupils to make greater progress in writing, particularly by the end of key stage 1 and across key stage 2.

You and the governing body recognise the importance of greater parental engagement in pupils' learning in key stages 1 and 2. This is an area that you and other leaders are quickly developing across the school so parents are able to share in their children's learning and are able to support them more effectively at home. You acknowledge that more opportunities need to be provided so that parents are able to share in their child's learning journey.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You provide regular and frequent training for the staff. Staff are aware of the different types of safeguarding concerns and can identify potential issues. The staff operate the school's systems dutifully so they can alert senior colleagues to any such issues.

Staff with responsibility for safeguarding know in detail the cases when individual pupils have needed additional support. You show initiative in working with outside agencies to get the right support for pupils, when they need it. Your approach is careful, considered, thoughtful and persistent. You are meticulous in every detail of your record keeping.

The governing body is well trained in safeguarding and places a high priority on pupils' welfare and safety. The lead governor for safeguarding has a high level of expertise. She visits the school regularly to ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place. The governing body has received appropriate safeguarding training.

Pupils are confident that staff look after them well. They told me that they feel very safe at school. All of the parents with whom I spoke, and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, confirmed that their children feel safe. Many parents stated that the school provides a warm and nurturing environment. Pupils reported that there is rarely any bullying.

Teachers provide regular safety updates for pupils, which include keeping safe in the community and online. The school places a high priority on pupils' online safety. Pupils raise awareness of online safety through their roles as e-cadets. They deliver important safety messages to their classes to complement the broader safety messages shared frequently by school staff.

## Inspection findings

- The governing body contains a high level of expertise. Governors are committed to developing the school further. They have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the school's development priorities. Governors understand the importance of raising pupils' achievement and they challenge staff effectively to make sure that they do this. You and other staff keep them well informed with the information they need. The governing body carefully checks the use of the pupil premium and the physical education and sport funding. They know that the funding is spent wisely and ensure that it has the greatest benefit for pupils.
- The early years leader and her team provide children with exciting learning opportunities. Staff use activities creatively to develop children's counting and phonic skills. For example, children enjoyed counting their 'dinosaur poo' pebbles and dug eagerly in the sand for objects beginning with the letter 'd'. Children were highly engaged and absorbed in their learning, using a range of digging tools. Children are ably supported in their learning by effective teaching assistants who ask probing questions to gauge children's knowledge and understanding.
- Staff in early years regularly talk about children's progress to ensure that activities meet their needs. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development has been below the national average for the past two years. The early years leader tracks children's progress carefully. She notes that small class sizes and children who have complex medical needs may not always achieve a good level of development; however, evidence shows that they do make good progress.
- During our tour of the school, we observed teachers and teaching assistants asking pupils probing questions so that they could assess effectively pupils' progress. For example, in Year 1, the teacher asked pupils about the different sized text in the class book, 'The Three Little Pigs', they were sharing. One pupil expertly answered that it showed that the character, the wolf, was 'shouting' at the three little pigs.
- Teachers provide interesting and stimulating learning opportunities. For example, pupils in Year 2 shared their recent learning in a school assembly. They confidently talked about their recent trip where they experienced a Victorian day. They showed pictures of their silhouette portraits and gave a rousing rendition of 'London's Burning', based on their work about the Great Fire of London.
- Pupils' workbooks in Year 6 show that pupils are challenged to use powerful vocabulary. Teachers provide resources in their classrooms, such as vocabulary cards, to enable pupils to improve their vocabulary.
- You recognise the importance of sport and music at your school. You have a talented staff team who nurture pupils' talents, and you ensure that they have the opportunity to share their skills. For example, pupils have achieved success at local sports tournaments, including success at the county-wide dance finals.
- You clearly explained that the recent high level of persistent absence resulted from complex medical issues and circumstances. You have positive relationships with parents of the affected pupils and have provided the necessary support to

ensure that the school meets these pupils' needs.

- Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average. You and your team are committed to ensuring that pupils attend school regularly.
- You and other teachers carefully check on pupils' progress. You hold regular meetings with teachers to ensure that they meet each pupil's needs. When pupils are falling behind, you provide additional support. Its impact is also checked carefully by teachers. The school's tracking system is rigorous. It provides useful assessment information so that teachers can check on pupils' progress regularly.
- The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's free-text service expressed an overwhelming satisfaction with the care and support given to their children. One parent expressed the views of many by stating that the school is 'very inclusive'. Parents acknowledged the positive ethos of the school and the caring environment.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers use pupils' assessment information to provide learning tasks that meet the needs of the most able pupils so that they make greater progress in writing
- leaders and teachers work more extensively with parents of pupils in key stages 1 and 2 to provide opportunities so that they can effectively engage with the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Emma Nuttall  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders and governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with parents before school and with a group of pupils about their school experience. Jointly with you, I visited a range of classes and we sampled pupils' books. In addition, I checked the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the single central register (the school's record of safeguarding recruitment checks on staff). I evaluated the school's documentation about pupils' achievement, planning for improvement and attendance. I took account of the 32 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 26 responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text service. There were no responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff or pupils for me to consider.