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Mrs Jacquie Price
Headteacher
Hapton Church of England/Methodist Primary School
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Dear Mrs Price

Short inspection of Hapton Church of England/Methodist Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 December 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. During this time, you have appointed two new teachers to replace staff leaving and the number of pupils on roll has continued to rise. Most importantly, you, your senior leadership team and governors have created a school where pupils enjoy learning and are happy.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and are happy to recommend this 'small but big-hearted family school' to others. Parents say that the school is led well and that leaders and teachers are approachable and know all the children very well. Parents are happy with the progress their children make. They commented positively on the inclusiveness and Christian ethos which permeates throughout the school under your guidance. Parents describe the school as 'a warm, family environment where children thrive and learn'.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive in support of the school and your leadership. They believe that the school has continued to improve since the previous inspection. Staff speak positively about the good behaviour of pupils and their calm and orderly conduct around school. Staff wholeheartedly believe in the values of the school and are proud to be members of staff at Hapton.

You and the governors are astutely aware of the school's strengths and the areas which need you need to develop further. You are aspirational for the school and its pupils.

Governors are highly committed, passionate and know the school well. They hold you and your team firmly to account to ensure that leaders and teachers continue to deliver high-quality education to pupils. The local authority has been a valuable source of support in evaluating the school's work and in developing the role of governors.

Governors and leaders have taken effective action to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Inspectors identified the need to continue to improve the quality of teaching. In response, you ensured that opportunities for staff training and sharing good practice are frequent, well planned and bespoke to the needs of teachers. Teachers work closely with staff from other schools to make sure that assessments are accurate and curriculum developments are up to date. You ensure high-quality teaching and learning by a thorough process of quality assurance, including lesson observations, analysis of pupils' work and assessment information. The local authority representative confirms the continuing improvements in teaching and learning across the school.

Following the previous inspection, you improved the precision of the school's plans for improvement. You now have clear improvement plans in place to address the issues considered in this inspection. These plans ensure that governors can hold leaders accountable for the progress and attainment of pupils at all key stages. Because of robust appraisal procedures, all staff are aware of the key improvement priorities and work well together to reach these goals. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and leads to improvement plans that are beginning to show impact across all areas.

During the inspection, you acknowledged that strategies for monitoring pupils' progress across the wider curriculum need further development. You have appropriate plans in place to develop subject leadership throughout the school. This should ensure that governors are able to hold subject leaders to account for the progress of pupils in all year groups and across the wider curriculum as firmly as they do in reading, writing and mathematics. You also acknowledged that the stretch and challenge of all pupils, based on their individual starting points is a key priority to help pupils to reach their full potential.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a culture of care and support which runs throughout the school. You and your staff are vigilant in safeguarding matters. Your thorough knowledge of each and every child and their families helps you to know when pupils are facing difficulties. You and the family learning mentor work closely with a wide range of agencies, local authorities and charities to ensure that your pupils are safe and supported. Parents spoken with during the inspection are grateful for the support you have given them and their children during difficult times.

All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Procedures for recruiting staff meet statutory requirements and staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, both online and personally.

Pupils spoken to during the inspection say that bullying is rare and that if it does occur, it is dealt with effectively by staff. All pupils say that there is an adult in school to talk to if

they have any worries or concerns. Pupils feel safe on site and parents are happy with site security. There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school.

Inspection findings

- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the early years is rising year on year and is above the national average. The leadership of early years is strong and ensures that children experience a wide range of activities daily to enhance their skills, development and knowledge.
- Parents are involved in their children's learning and are happy with how well their children have settled. Teachers plan activities which meet children's needs right from the beginning of their time in early years because of strong transitional links with nurseries and families. Children make good progress as a result. For example, after a topic on 'people and communities', children's views about people who help them progress from 'mummy helps me dress' to an understanding of the role of the emergency services and the very beginnings of future career aspirations.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils is, however, lower than that of their non-disadvantaged peers both in school and nationally. Although not all disadvantaged children achieved a good level of development in 2017, they made good progress from their typically low starting points. This strong progress is a result of bespoke activities and topics planned for children, including a widening of their life experiences. Staff creatively use a variety of resources and activities, such as growing vegetables in the school's allotment. As a result, any gaps in children's learning begin to close during their time in early years.
- Achievement in the Year 1 phonics check is well above the national average. Leaders ensure that targeted interventions and high-quality teaching enable pupils to make good progress in this area.
- In Year 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was in line with the national average in 2017. However, only a small proportion went beyond the expected standard to reach the higher level. As a result, leaders have introduced several strategies to increase the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth. Support for identified pupils, challenges in continuous provision, and a greater focus on spelling, handwriting and extended writing are beginning to have a positive effect on the progress of current pupils. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning, particularly in writing, and are excited to showcase their writing skills by writing letters to 'Eric, the class elf'.
- In 2016 and 2017, Year 6 pupils' attainment and progress were broadly average in reading and writing. Progress in mathematics, however, dropped to below average in 2017. Leaders are aware that progress in mathematics needs to increase and have taken immediate action to improve outcomes. As a result, teachers are implementing a focus on mathematical reasoning across the school.
- Teachers use practical activities and real-life experiences to help pupils solve problems. Through a consistent approach to problem-solving, pupils are beginning to be able to visualise the problem and outline the steps necessary to solve the problems presented to them. As a result, pupils are developing much stronger mathematical

reasoning skills. This is evident in pupils' work across year groups and key stages.

- Pupils are confident, friendly and polite. They work and play well with each other and show respect for staff and visitors. Pupils at Hapton Primary School are encouraged to develop academically, emotionally and socially. Pupils, staff and families work together as a community to ensure that pupils grow as happy, thoughtful citizens of the future. The school's mission to be an 'extension of good family life, where each unique individual is respected and valued' is lived and seen in action throughout the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the role of middle leaders develops to lead subject improvements and gain expert professional knowledge so that leaders and governors know how well groups of pupils in all year groups are progressing across the wider curriculum
- pupils are challenged consistently so that the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth at both key stages increases.

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

Helen O'Neill
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, senior leaders and middle leaders. In addition, I met with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I met formally with a group of pupils from across the school and talked informally with others around the school and in lessons.

You accompanied me on visits to classes where we observed teaching and learning, spoke with pupils and looked at the work in some pupils' books. I examined a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, leadership and management and the school's assessment information related to pupils' progress and attainment. I also scrutinised a range of policies and the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation report. In addition, I undertook a review of the school's website.

As part of the inspection, I considered the views expressed by parents in the 47 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as comments received via the free-text facility on Parent View. I also spoke with parents informally in the playground, met with parents in school and received a letter from a parent. I took into account the

21 responses to a questionnaire for staff, the 44 responses to a questionnaire for pupils and two letters written by pupils.