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Mrs Marilyn Freeman  
Headteacher  
Scarbrick St Mark's Church of England Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Freeman

### **Short inspection of Scarbrick St Mark's Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 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 December 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 provide strong leadership and have steered the school successfully through a period of change. You are well supported by committed governors and staff who share your high aspirations for teaching and learning.

You have worked successfully to address the areas for improvement identified by inspectors in 2013. The previous inspection team asked leaders to improve teaching in mathematics. Following successful training, teachers now develop pupils' problem-solving skills. As a result, outcomes in mathematics have risen sharply. Across different subjects, leaders make sure that teachers plan lessons that closely match pupils' needs. Pupils make good progress from their different starting points.

Your friendly and welcoming school lies at the heart of the village community. You work closely with St Mark's church. The local vicar is a frequent visitor. She supports staff well with developing pupils' spiritual, moral and social understanding. Pupils entertain older residents with their carol singing each year. Year 6 mentors enjoy helping children in Reception: hearing them read, teaching them playground games and eating lunch together. Through such experiences, pupils learn to be 'not just for us but for everyone'.

You provide a well-planned and engaging curriculum. Staff and governors make

sure that pupils enjoy a range of subjects and experiences. Pupils' artwork decorates the school, highlighting their creative skills. In lessons, teachers plan interesting activities to develop pupils' learning. In Class 1, we observed younger children having great fun in the space ship role-play area, developing their writing, speaking and listening skills as they played. Key stage 2 pupils spoke about how much they enjoy swimming lessons and developing their life-saving skills. Pupils in Class 3 showed me their history project on the Second World War, including their model of a warship. Consequently, pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic learners.

Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and in the playground. Most parents are delighted with the quality of education their children receive. These parents feel the school responds well to any issues they may have. A small minority of parents raised some concerns about how effectively the school deals with bullying. However, the pupils I spoke to were adamant that there is no bullying. Moreover, they are confident that teachers would deal with any rare incidents effectively. During my visit, I observed pupils behaving well around school and in the playground.

Recent staffing changes have meant that most subject leaders are new to their roles. You have put in place training opportunities for staff. They are keen to develop their expertise further and to build on the improvements that you have already made to teaching and learning. You are now establishing systems to monitor the effectiveness of teaching in subjects other than mathematics and English. In areas such as history, art and geography, subject leaders are developing an accurate way to measure pupils' learning over time and to use this information to improve pupils' learning.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding has a high profile within the school. Child protection documentation is thorough, fit for purpose and detailed. Leaders ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Comprehensive training ensures that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and are quick to follow up on any concerns. Leaders work well with other agencies to make sure that pupils receive the support that they need to be safe. Several staff have qualifications in paediatric and general first aid.

You make sure that the curriculum is filled with a wealth of opportunities to teach pupils how to keep themselves safe. Parents and staff agree that pupils are safe and well cared for.

### **Inspection findings**

- The inspection focused on several key lines of enquiry. I considered the effectiveness of the school's approach to raising attendance levels. Almost all pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. However, in 2016, a small number had high levels of persistent absence. Staff monitor pupils' attendance carefully and take swift action to follow up any absences. The school celebrates

pupils' good attendance with certificates and in assemblies and newsletters. You frequently inform parents about pupils' level of absence and the school's expectations for high attendance. Consequently, attendance levels have now improved. This includes the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils.

- A second key line of enquiry related to outcomes for children in the Reception Year. At the end of 2016, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development was below previous years. During my visit, I found that you undertake thorough assessments of children's levels of learning at the start of their first term and at regular intervals. Staff plan activities and learning opportunities to match children's needs and interests. Children make good progress from their starting points, developing skills including early reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has now risen.
- For my third focus, I looked at the areas for improvement from the last inspection. The inspector asked you to improve the pace of pupils' learning and ensure that work is at the right level for pupils of all abilities. Leaders and governors have made sure that teaching and learning have been at the centre of school improvement. It is clear from visiting classes, talking to pupils and looking at their work that lessons are well planned to meet the varied abilities of pupils. Because of good teaching, pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- The previous inspector also asked you to improve the teaching of mental calculation and problem-solving skills, particularly for girls and the least able. By looking at pupils' work and talking to pupils, I can see that they are confident in applying their skills in mathematics. Those pupils I spoke to said that they enjoy the mathematical challenges that teachers give them. Because of recent improvements, pupils now achieve well in mathematics, including girls and the least able.
- A further line of enquiry related to how well phonics is taught in school. In the early years and Year 1, teachers regularly check pupils' early reading skills. They plan daily phonics lessons to match pupils' needs. Pupils read regularly to adults, practising their skills. Pupils made good progress from their varied starting points and attainment is in line with pupils nationally.
- I also looked at reading, test results for which lagged behind that of pupils nationally in 2017 at the end of key stage 2. I considered whether pupils at the school were attaining high enough outcomes from their starting points. You and governors have taken steps to improve how staff teach reading. I found that pupils enjoy reading for pleasure and read fluently and with confidence. In lessons, staff develop pupils' reading skills through carefully planned reading activities. Because of recent improvements, current pupils make good progress from their starting points.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the roles of new subject leaders are embedded to ensure that they have a greater impact on whole-school teaching in all subjects
- the school's system of assessment used to track pupils' progress in different subjects across the curriculum matches that already found in mathematics and English.

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

Elizabeth Stevens  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you and three teachers. I also met with four governors. I spoke to a representative of the local authority. I met with 12 pupils from key stages 1 and 2 and spoke informally with other pupils during lessons. I visited all classes with you where I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils. I also heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read. I carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work across the school.

I took account of 18 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including 17 free-text responses. I also met with one parent after school. I considered the responses of four staff and 18 pupils to Ofsted's online questionnaires. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation. I evaluated safeguarding procedures including policies to keep pupils safe, staff training records, safeguarding checks and attendance information. I undertook a review of the school's website.