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22 January 2018

Mrs Naomi Healey
Headteacher
St John's CofE Primary School, Cliviger
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Dear Mrs Healey

Short inspection of St John's CofE Primary School, Cliviger

Following my visit to the school on 9 January 2018, 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 2014.

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 to drive forward improvements in teaching and learning. You have a clear vision for pupils and want them to thrive. Staff share your high expectations, passion and resolve.

You have steered the school successfully through a difficult time with changes in leadership and staffing. You have forged a strong senior leadership team whose members have an accurate understanding of the standards achieved by pupils and what needs to be done to improve these further. Staff who responded to the online survey are proud to work in the school. You welcome the support and challenge from your school improvement adviser and teaching consultant.

The school's Christian ethos and motto, 'learn, pray, care and play', are borne out in all aspects of your work. The pupils I spoke to were friendly and articulate learners who show respect for others. Pupils feel valued and well supported. As one pupil said, 'Teachers are kind and make sure that no one is left out.' Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons. You ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well through a wide variety of assemblies, extra-curricular activities and trips. Pupils learn about other faiths and visit different places of worship. They develop good leadership skills in various roles, for example as school councillors and playtime buddies.

Since the last inspection, in 2014, the membership of the governing body has

changed substantially. Governors possess the skills and expertise from a range of professional backgrounds to challenge and support you and other leaders. Governors are committed and want the best for pupils. One commented, 'We want the children to be happy, safe and enjoy a wide breadth of education.' Governors have a strong understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement of the school.

All the parents and carers I spoke with were very positive about the school. As one parent commented, 'The school is a warm and friendly community.' The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, feel that their children are taught well, and say that they would recommend the school to others.

At the previous inspection, the inspector asked you to ensure that assessment information is used to raise expectations of what pupils can achieve. Your expectations of all pupils to achieve well are now consistently high. The information staff gather from assessments of pupils' progress is accurate and reliable. Teachers are using this information to inform their planning well so that all pupils achieve their targets. You have strengthened teachers' skills in questioning the most able pupils. The most able pupils at key stage 1 exceeded the national standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016 and 2017. However, you are aware that there is still work to do to ensure that the most able pupils in all classes are challenged further.

Another area for development from the previous inspection was to ensure that pupils made faster progress in writing and mathematics. My review of your data and scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that pupils are making good progress in writing in key stages 1 and 2. Pupils' work also demonstrates that pupils can sustain consistency in the use of grammar and punctuation when completing extended writing. In mathematics, teachers are providing more opportunities to help pupils apply their skills and explain their reasoning as a result of training. There has been strong improvement in pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics at the end of key stage 1. However, you acknowledge the need to improve the standards pupils reach in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 by developing their fluency with number calculations.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of vigilance in the school. Statutory checks are carried out on all staff to ensure their suitability to work with children. Staff have a clear understanding of potential risks and know how to deal with any concerns. Leaders work well with a range of external agencies to support potentially vulnerable pupils. Referrals are made effectively and in a timely manner. Pupils say they feel safe and well looked after in school. They report bullying is rare and that staff act quickly to resolve any issues. Pupils know whom they can talk to for help and support. Parents I spoke with, including those who completed Parent View, felt their children are safe and cared for well.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry, the first of which related to attendance. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is shown by their attendance, which is above the national average. However, absence of disadvantaged pupils was higher than the national average in 2016. You work closely with families and use rewards to promote attendance. Consequently, attendance rates for these pupils are now above the national average.
- My second line of enquiry focused on how well pupils achieve in mathematics in key stage 2. Provisional results at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 show that the progress made by pupils in mathematics was below the national average. The newly appointed subject leader for mathematics has implemented strategies to reverse this decline. The subject leader is working with teachers to improve pupils' fluency with number calculations. Assessment systems have been strengthened and work now more closely matches the needs of individual pupils. A review of current assessment information and a scrutiny of pupils' work indicate progress in mathematics is improving. However, you are aware that more needs to be done to fully embed the positive changes that have been made since September.
- You rightly identified that pupils did not make rapid enough progress in reading at the end of key stage 2 in 2016. You introduced a range of effective strategies to improve pupils' progress. For example, there is a whole-school focus on exploring texts to infer meaning and make deductions. You have purchased a wide range of books so that there are many that appeal to both boys and girls. During guided-reading sessions, teachers and other adults help pupils to improve their comprehension skills. Pupils who read to me were able to decode unfamiliar words and used effective phonics skills to do so. The most able pupils read with fluency and expression. Provisional results at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 and the school's current assessment information show that attainment and progress have improved.
- My scrutiny of pupils' work and my discussions with pupils in lessons indicate that most of the activities set by teachers are closely matched to the ability of pupils, including those pupils who are the most able. However, you acknowledged there is further work to do to ensure that the most able pupils are challenged to achieve as well as they should.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- progress in mathematics in key stage 2 improves further by building on pupils' fluency with number calculations
- the most able pupils are challenged to achieve the highest possible standards.

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

Ahmed Marikar
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and a group of senior and middle leaders. I met with seven governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also met with a representative of the local authority. I met formally with pupils and also spoke with other pupils during breaktime. I visited a number of classes where I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils. I listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read. I scrutinised pupils' work across the school. Parents talked with me as they dropped their children off at school. In addition, I took account of 34 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including 35 free-text responses. I also considered the views of 27 staff and 32 pupils through Ofsted's online questionnaires. A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' attainment and progress. I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies about keeping children safe, records of training, safeguarding checks and attendance and behaviour information. I also undertook a review of the school's website.