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Mrs Sarah Wilson
Headteacher
Newland St John's Church of England Academy
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Dear Mrs Wilson

Short inspection of Newland St John's Church of England Academy

Following my visit to the school on 16 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in July 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 lead and manage the school effectively and inspire your colleagues to share your high aspirations for the pupils and their families. Pupils grow and flourish in the caring ethos that underpins all that the school does. Parents and carers value the strong sense of community you encourage within the school's very diverse cultural and social mix where everyone is treated with kindness and respect. Since joining the school, you have taken the necessary steps to improve the quality of teaching and learning. With effective support from governors and the academy trust, you have managed staff turnover successfully and made astute appointments to put the school in a strong position to improve rapidly.

Your expectations of all staff are high and you provide effective support, guidance and training to improve their knowledge, skills and practice. Staff talk about being part of the school family, and are proud to work there. Despite a dip in the outcomes for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2017, particularly in mathematics, indications are that all pupils are now making good progress and are on track to achieve well this summer in the national testing. In both key stages 1 and 2, an increasing number of pupils are exceeding expectations because they enjoy learning and want to do well. You, your senior leaders and the academy trust monitor teaching and learning closely. You all know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and subject leaders are taking effective action to improve provision in their areas of responsibility. The procedures to assess pupils' progress and achievements are accurate and reliable and successfully inform teachers' planning. Pupils

are being challenged well but there is still scope to raise expectations further, particularly in mathematics at key stage 2. Through close scrutiny of pupils' progress, you quickly identify any pupils at risk of falling behind their targets and plan additional support to help them stay on track to make the progress they should. You also maximise advice from partner schools to improve provision for your pupils.

The actions taken to improve provision for reading and mathematics are effective. Increased time devoted to writing in other subjects encourages pupils to explore their interests and extend their knowledge, for example about the age of steam and the effect of the industrial revolution on shaping people's lives and the country's landscape. The introduction of a new mathematics scheme has already had a positive impact on accelerating pupils' progress. More pupils are now working at a greater depth of learning, especially in their mental agility in arithmetic and their reasoning skills. Occasionally, a few pupils at key stage 2, especially among the girls working on the borderline between the age-related expectations and greater depth, lack the confidence to attempt harder tasks. While the teaching of reading is good and pupils enjoy reading, a few explained that they would like to read to others more at school as they did not always have the opportunity at home. The teaching of basic literacy skills is good and pupils have a secure grounding at the end of Year 2. Older pupils at key stage 2, who possibly did not have this secure foundation, occasionally make careless errors in their grammar, punctuation and grammar; this remains an area for further work.

Governors are highly ambitious for the pupils in their care. Through regular visits on business matters, monitoring activities and social events, including going with pupils on school trips and residential visits, they know the school community well and understand the many challenges that some pupils face in their lives. They question information they receive from the headteacher about pupils' progress and challenge senior leaders to explain where improvements are not having the effect they should. Governors have the skills and expertise to support developments and ensure that all funds are maximised to accelerate the progress of all groups of pupils.

Children start in the Reception class with skills that are below those typical for their age. A number have little or no pre-school experience. In addition, a rising number are from families who speak English as an additional language. Staff accommodate these diverse needs very effectively and children make good progress. The proportion that meet the expected standard when they move into Year 1 is in line with the national average. This rate of progress is sustained successfully at key stage 1 through continued good teaching. An increasing number are working at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2. At key stage 2, all groups of pupils are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2017, disadvantaged pupils did not make the same level of progress as their classmates in mathematics. With effective support for these pupils, school data and work in pupils' books do not reflect any significant difference this year. This is also the case for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, who make good progress from their starting points.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school takes its duty of care responsibilities very seriously. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Governors understand fully their statutory responsibilities to keep children safe. They conduct regular health and safety checks and those responsible for safeguarding ensure that all procedures are followed diligently. Leaders review the policies and procedures related to keeping pupils safe regularly, and check that all staff and governors are up to date in their training regarding safeguarding. Checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are thorough and logged precisely. Leaders ensure that all staff and governors understand the safeguarding arrangements and act promptly if they have concerns about any child or their family. Records of any incidents and concerns are comprehensive. Staff are particularly vigilant in safeguarding vulnerable pupils and alert other agencies promptly if concerns arise. Staff follow up all absences urgently and instigate legal action if any persistent absenteeism escalates. They also provide advice and guidance to children and families on how to stay healthy and safe, and about their emotional and mental health.

Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for at school and their parents agree. As one pupil explained, 'You cannot escape once you are inside and the fences are too high for bad people to get in.' Staff keep parents fully informed if they have any concerns about their children. Pupils said that they loved school and were happy there because teachers were kind and helped them to learn. They explained that staff teach them how to stay safe outside school, with talks on road and fire safety, and the risks posed by social media sites and mobile phones. They know about stranger danger, and that you should not post personal details or photographs on the internet because strangers might use this to harm you, your friends or other people. They know that bullying in any form is not acceptable and any incidents would be dealt with firmly. As one pupil explained, 'Bullying is unkind. People might look different or speak another language but inside we are all the same.' They know who to go to if they are worried at school or at home.

Inspection findings

- The first area we agreed to examine was the school's performance data from 2017 and to check that current pupils are making good progress. Pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2017 did better than in the previous year and better than pupils nationally, including at the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' outcomes at the end of Year 6 were lower than the school expected, particularly in mathematics. This was mainly due to a few pupils falling just short of their targets. Current in-school data and work in pupils' books show that pupils are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics at both key stages. An increased proportion of pupils are working at greater depth in all these subjects.
- I also evaluated the effectiveness of the monitoring of teaching and learning because pupil outcomes at the end of Year 6 dipped in 2017 against the previous year. My findings are that you monitor teachers' performance through classroom observations, checking their planning and scrutinising pupils' workbooks with rigour. You involve key leaders in this monitoring to identify where teaching needs improving and plan relevant training and support to help teachers improve their practice. You check that teacher assessments are accurate and analyse the data closely to make sure all pupils

are on track to achieve well against their starting points. Outcomes are rising rapidly across the school, but pupils at key stage 2 could be challenged further, especially the less confident learners who have the capacity to achieve more.

- I examined the quality of provision for mathematics. In 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics, at the end of Year 6, was below the national average and too few achieved the higher level. Current pupils in Year 6 are making good progress. A few do have gaps in their learning due to various factors, including joining the school late in key stage 2 or having limited education in this country. A few also join key stage 2 with little or no English. Getting to grips with subject-specific vocabulary is sometimes an issue for some of these pupils. For example, a few struggled to visualise the terms horizontal, vertical and diagonal when working on a number grid. The school works hard to meet these various needs, but some pupils have insufficient time in the school to catch up with their classmates.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers use a published scheme to support their planning but modify materials to meet their pupils' needs more effectively. Pupils' arithmetic skills, mental agility and fluency, and their ability to reason logically are improving rapidly. Pupils are becoming more confident in applying what they know about number operations, for example to explain the relationship between multiplication and division and fractions and decimals. Teachers insist that pupils justify the methods they use to solve multi-step problems and show them how to work systematically to avoid errors. Timed tasks are proving popular with many as they race to improve their personal best. Teachers are aware that a few, often well capable girls, find the subject daunting. Unless directed, these pupils shy away from harder tasks for fear of being wrong. Pupils understand why mathematics is important in everyday life and why logical thinking and reasoning are important skills to master. There is scope to challenge pupils further so that more achieve at the higher level.
- I also looked at the provision for disadvantaged pupils as they did not do as well as non-disadvantaged pupils in the mathematics tests at the end of Year 6 in 2017. Increased and more sharply focused support this year, often on an individual level, has been effective. These pupils are making good progress and many more are working at greater depth than was the case this time last year. The additional funding to support these pupils is having the effect it should in raising their achievement.
- Pupils' outcomes in spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting fell short of what is expected at the end of Year 6 in 2017. These skills are taught effectively from the early years onwards; by the end of key stage 1, most pupils are fairly proficient in applying these skills accurately. However, when not reminded by teachers directly, especially at key stage 2 when pupils are writing at length in many subjects, a few, in their haste to complete work, make too many careless errors. Pupils fail to check their work closely but acknowledge their mistakes when reminded. These lapses among a few pupils detract from the overall good progress they are making. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to celebrate pupils' efforts with classroom displays that might prompt pupils to build on what they have already achieved to improve further.
- Staff and governors are all highly committed to the school and want pupils to be well prepared for secondary school. They make sure pupils have an engaging curriculum that includes topics pupils want to explore and additional activities that enrich and extend their learning. Pupils talk very animatedly about the wonders of inventions

such as the steam engine and decry how tough life was for people in the war. They discuss the plight of refugees and the perils of global warming, climate change and pollution. Through tending an allotment, they discover how to grow, nurture and harvest produce for the school kitchen and are rightly proud of their efforts. Those visiting London shortly said, 'I can't believe I am really going there!' Pupils say that teachers make learning fun and know that it is important to learn if you want a good job one day. There is mutual respect between staff and pupils; this underpins the school's well-ordered, harmonious, multi-cultural and multi-faith community. Pupils form trusting relationships with others and behave well at all times.

- The school is very vigilant in promoting pupils' personal development and well-being and takes good care of each child's needs. Most pupils attend regularly because they want to be there to learn and make friends. They manage themselves sensibly around school and help each other when staff are busy. They take responsibilities seriously as playground leaders and school councillors and make themselves useful in other ways. Pupils who share a common home language translate for those who are less confident with English and teachers really value this support. They try hard to do their best and busy themselves sensibly when left to work on their own. Pupils' behaviour is often exemplary. Teachers manage occasional lapses promptly and effectively.
- Parents are positive about the school and everything the school does to support their children in both their learning and their personal development. They say that the school is a happy place; some travel a fair distance to bring their children to the school. They say they are kept well informed about issues related to their children and praise staff highly.
- Children in the early years make a strong start to their education. Most attain a good level of development at the end of the early years. This flying start supports pupils' good progress in subsequent years. You have high expectations of staff and pupils and have the support of governors, staff, the academy trust and parents to improve the school further. You have established good provision throughout the school and pupils are benefiting as a result. Teaching and learning are securely good. All pupils are valued equally and given every opportunity to succeed. Pupils are safe, happy and well cared for in school. Those facing challenges in their lives, including those who are disadvantaged, become confident learners and achieve well through effective support.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers challenge all pupils further but especially those in key stage 2 who lack confidence in their learning in mathematics;
- pupils apply their basic skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling accurately in all their written work and check this work carefully for careless errors;
- pupils, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, fully understand subject-specific terminology;
- classroom displays celebrate pupils' work and prompt them to build on what they already know and can do successfully.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of York, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kingston upon Hull City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you and all your staff, the chair of the governing body and two other governors. I also met with senior leaders, including some subject leaders and other staff, and the executive head of the multi-academy trust. I reviewed documentation relating to pupils' progress and achievement, the school improvement plan, and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and examined the evidence therein. I observed pupils around the school, including on the playground, in the dining hall and in classes. Together, we visited all classes and discussed these observations. I looked at books, spoke to pupils about their work and listened to them read. I also met with pupils to get their views of the school and took into account the 22 responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire. I considered the views of the 13 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, the 13 text messages submitted by parents to Ofsted and the phone call Ofsted received from one parent. I also considered the 12 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.