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23 February 2018

Mrs Kate Hodson  
Executive Headteacher  
Coningsby St Michael's Church of England Primary School  
School Lane  
Coningsby  
Lincoln  
Lincolnshire  
LN4 4SJ

Dear Mrs Hodson

### **Short inspection of Coningsby St Michael's Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 February 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 July 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school is popular within the community and is growing in size. At the previous inspection, there were 10 classes, now there are 14. Pupils are no longer learning in mixed year groups. Additionally, there have been leadership developments. Most of the issues raised at the time of the last inspection have been addressed effectively. You are currently providing support to a local school, which means other members of the leadership team have had to take on more responsibilities. They have risen well to this challenge. You rightly believe the team has the skills and drive to continue this school's improvement.

The school is due to become an academy with Lincoln Anglican Academies Trust (LAAT) in March 2018. At the time of this inspection, the due diligence process had just been undertaken. You and the governing body are excited by the prospect of this partnership. Important to you is maintaining the Christian ethos that is of such significance to your vision for the school community.

You lead a vibrant and caring school. Pupils and their families are known well by leaders and by all staff. A great deal happens to involve parents and carers in the education of their child. On the day of the inspection, parents were involved in a celebration of their child's achievements, and additionally they were able to join a

planning session in order to contribute to their child's further learning. Parents were keen to inform the inspector of the value they placed on such occasions. They appreciate the support their child receives. The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, believed their child is well taught and makes good progress and would recommend the school.

A large proportion of pupils who attend the school are children from families in the armed services. These children receive tremendous support. They thrive as a result. Parents of these children said they felt gratitude to the school for the consideration and care their child received. These pupils attend well and make good progress.

The school has a high number of pupils who enter or leave the school at unusual times in the academic year. This is a challenge that you embrace. You told me that this was not a school that 'stood still'. You and the staff continually adapt the provision for pupils in order to best meet their needs. You are keen to ensure that while pupils attend the school they receive the best possible support in order to make the progress they should.

You rightly identify that key stage 1 is an area of focus for the school. Leaders' actions have rapidly improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in this key stage. Evidence in work books indicate that pupils, particularly in Year 2, are making accelerated progress. The books we reviewed together revealed that pupils have many opportunities in lessons to produce high-quality work, including extended writing. Leaders' information indicates that a greater proportion of pupils will achieve as their starting points indicate that they should. We agreed that, although there was evident improvement, this key stage should continue to be an area of focus.

Previously, pupils' absence was a concern for the school. This issue is being addressed by leaders. The proportion of pupils absent from school is similar to the national average. Effective strategies are in place to make sure pupils attend. These strategies involve regular contact with parents, including home visits. Pupils are also rewarded in many ways so that they value being in school. A class visit from the school pet, Hoglet, an African pigmy hedgehog, is their particular favourite treat. The number of pupils who are regularly absent has also improved. Leaders are not complacent. They regularly review their practice to ensure that more pupils are in school and are learning. You know that disadvantaged pupils do not attend school quite as often as their peers and agree that it is a priority to encourage their better attendance.

Information in pupils' work books and leaders' records indicates that disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving. Teachers now devise individualised plans to ensure that this group of pupils progress as they should. We agreed that, although disadvantaged pupils are receiving personalised help, more needs to be done to refine and evaluate the impact of this support, to help ensure that they achieve at the rates they should. Governors agree that their oversight of the progress made by this group of pupils could be further sharpened.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

Strong support is in place for pupils. All staff are vigilant. A learning mentor is employed to ensure high-quality pastoral guidance. This learning mentor is highly effective and has extensive skills and experience. She is clearly driven to ensure that pupils receive the assistance and care they require in order to succeed at school.

The 'nest', a resource organised and overseen by the learning mentor, allows pupils a 'secure and nurturing environment' in which to receive help. Evidence indicates that this support is successful. Many pupils develop the appropriate skills and are able to 'fly from the nest' and progress well.

The most vulnerable pupils are well supported. The response to any concern is rapid. Links with external agencies are good. Where needed, the school sources a range of other support in order to best meet pupils' needs, for example, counselling.

The safeguarding policy is appropriate and is up to date. All staff within the school, including the governing body, receive safeguarding training and have regular updates in order that they remain well informed. The school's business manager is tenacious. She manages the systems linked to the recruitment of all staff well. All records are rigorously kept, monitored and overseen. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Pupils enthusiastically praised the care and concern shown to them by all staff in the school. All said they had someone to turn to in times of trouble. Dinner supervisors were especially praised for the ways that they provided help during lunchtime, particularly in the playground.

Pupils said bullying was rare. They said 'fallings out with friends' happened but they were helped by their teachers to deal with this appropriately. They appreciated the school's 'worry box', and the very many people to whom they could confide if needed. Those pupils who spoke with the inspector were unequivocal that they felt safe and happy in school.

## **Inspection findings**

- You are fully aware that pupils enter the school with starting points lower than the national average. Many of these pupils make progress within the early years, but do not progress as well as they could at key stage 1. We agreed that even more is required to accelerate further pupils' progress within this key stage.
- The individualised plans to support disadvantaged pupils are not sharply enough focused on the precise actions needed to ensure that their progress is accelerated.
- Pupils behave well around school and in class. They are polite and keen to speak about their work and the care they receive from their teachers. At lunchtime, pupils eat together harmoniously. The new lunchtime arrangements are effective;

pupils share food together and socialise appropriately.

- Pupils make positive contributions to the ways in which the school develops and improves. For example, their suggestions to add a playground 'zoning clock' has led to pupils self-regulating the timings of football games. This has improved behaviour at lunchtime and reduced rapidly the incidents of pupils 'falling out'.
- A minority of parents who spoke with the inspector believe that leaders' communication with them could improve further. Some said they would like a little more opportunity at the start of the school day to speak with their child's teacher. Some are not as aware as they could be of the extensive efforts that take place to ensure pupils' safety and welfare is safeguarded.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue the work to ensure a greater proportion of pupils achieve as their starting points indicate they should by the end of key stage 1
- continue the work to ensure that those disadvantaged pupils attend school regularly and make the progress they should throughout the school
- continue the laudable work with parents and improve communication further, particularly about the vast range of effective actions that take place to ensure that pupils feel safe and happy in their 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

Jayne Ashman  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, the senior leadership team and some governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with the whole-school staff during the morning briefing. I met with a group of Year 6 pupils and spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I considered the views of 54 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I spoke with the learning mentor and discussed her work. I visited the 'nest'. We conducted an analysis of Year 6 pupils' work across a range of subjects. We also reviewed the work of selected pupils in Year 2. I evaluated a range of documents, including leaders' self-evaluation, development planning, safeguarding records and policies.