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Ms Zaheda Adam
Headteacher
Bywell Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School
Bendigo Road
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Dear Ms Adam

Short inspection of Bywell Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 31 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 November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You know your community well and respond to its needs. Your openness and availability was commented on very positively by many of the parents and carers with whom I spoke during the inspection. These excellent relationships which you and your staff have with parents have had a very positive impact on improving attendance at the school, which is now above the national average. You have instilled in parents a clear understanding of the importance of their child's regular attendance. They know that if they are in school they are learning and they are safe. Attendance has improved and remains a strength of the school.

You have worked effectively to develop leadership throughout the school. The previous inspection report in November 2012 identified the development of leadership across the school as a particular need. You have addressed this very effectively. You see an emphasis on shared leadership, quite rightly, as a key way of ensuring sustained improvement at the school. You have actively developed a culture of high expectations for all. This is appreciated by staff, pupils and parents. They rise to the high standards that you set. You have been particularly effective at

developing the skills of middle leaders. They are highly motivated and well placed to deliver the focused support that will ensure that the school continues to improve. Their work with governors is increasingly effective and helps ensure that governors know the school well and are able to hold you and your team to account.

You have responded effectively to historical shortcomings in pupils' writing that have resulted from past weaknesses in teaching. The development of pupils' skills as writers is a real and effective focus of the school at every level. You have improved the quality of the teaching of writing and carefully and systematically linked pupils' reading with their development as writers. The quality of the teaching of writing at the school is good. Pupils can speak confidently about how their reading has a positive impact on their writing. Middle leaders play an important role in these developments by working with staff to develop their skills and then working with you to monitor their impact on pupils' facility with written language. Governors, through their links to specific subject areas and phases of the school, have a strong overview of the development of writing. Because of governors' knowledge and growing expertise, they are able to hold you and your staff to account to ensure continued improvement.

Staff morale is high. You use the performance management of staff to develop their skills, confidence and deep understanding of pupils' needs and of how to address them. You have a 'joined-up' approach to the assessment of teachers' skills. This ensures that staff see the vital contribution they make to whole-school planning and pupils' success through the development of their skills and confidence. You monitor pupils' progress, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, regularly and very carefully. Because of this, you and your team promptly pick up any loss of pace in learning and address it successfully.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are meticulously kept and are of high quality.

You have established a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. You, your staff and the governing body take your safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. You ensure that regular and effective training is provided for all staff and governors. As a result, they are up to date in their knowledge and understanding. You, as designated safeguarding leader, have strong links with outside agencies. Your records of your dealings with these agencies are detailed and show your meticulous approach to this vital work. You engage with the local authority promptly and follow up safeguarding issues tenaciously.

Inspection findings

- Reading is a strength at the school. You have been successful in ensuring that pupils develop their skills as readers of fiction and non-fiction texts. You have also encouraged a love of reading. School displays celebrate and encourage

reading. During the inspection, pupils spoke to me with real enthusiasm about what they were reading. I saw staff using deft questioning to elicit detailed responses from pupils about the ways writers use word choice to create mood and tone for the reader. Progress in reading at the school is strong and above the national average.

- You use a range of strategies to ensure that pupils develop their skills in mathematics. Your staff regularly and diligently monitor each pupil's progress in mathematics. As a result, you are able to identify quickly where any misconceptions occur. You address these with interventions on the same or next day. As a result of these and similar actions, pupils make strong progress in mathematics.
- Your special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is very effective. She works with staff and governors to monitor the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Additional funding is well spent. Staff expectations for these pupils are high. Their progress is monitored very carefully. As a result, these pupils make good progress from their starting points. Communications with parents are good. The attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is good.
- Similarly, you, your staff and governors carefully monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils. You are keenly aware that the numbers of these pupils and their differing needs change from year to year. You and your staff, however, are consistent in your careful planning and attention to the needs and strengths of these pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress. You spend the additional funding for these pupils effectively. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is good. However, there are still some differences between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of others.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is a real strength of the school. Collective worship is enjoyed and welcomed by staff and pupils. You use this time carefully and well to underline the importance of challenge and care for the self and each other. Pupils were riveted by and eager to engage with the act of collective worship that I saw on the subject of our need to be careful and respectful of others.
- All staff demonstrate good subject knowledge. They know their pupils well and plan work that stimulates and engages them. Classrooms are attractive, friendly places where pupils feel confident and relaxed. Relationships between adults and pupils and pupils and pupils are marked by kindness and respect. As a result, there is no interruption to learning and so pupils make good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants use a range of strategies in their questioning of pupils to stimulate and deepen their understanding and confidence.
- Science teaching is a particular strength of the school. I saw pupils enthusiastically and skilfully creating models of human gums and teeth in coloured plasticene in three Year 4 classes. Pupils were able to describe the function of each of the teeth accurately and with a real sense of pleasure in learning. Staff used carefully focused questioning to deepen pupils' understanding. Science-specific vocabulary was used by adults and children. There was real evidence of pupils developing and using their scientific skills of observation and recording.

- Pupils like coming to school. They enjoy it and are very appreciative and aware of the effort and care that you and your staff put into keeping them safe. Pupils told me that they feel safe and know how to stay safe. As one pupils said to me, 'We trust the adults at the school.' They told me that there are regular activities and events at the school that help them understand how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when online. They said that bullying is very rare. They also said that they are alert to the range of forms that bullying can take and of what to do if it happened to them or to a friend. They were very confident that adults at the school would deal with it promptly and well. They welcome the opportunities they have to serve others as Bywell Buddies and through the school council.
- Pupils show high levels of understanding and care for themselves and for others. They were able to tell me many of the ingredients that constitute a healthy lifestyle. They were also very aware of the duty that they have to care for, and look out for, each other, both in class and around the school. They are very well behaved and polite.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to reduce the differences in performance between some disadvantaged pupils and others so that all disadvantaged pupils make assured progress.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Church of England diocese of Leeds, the regional schools' commissioner and the director of children's services for Kirklees. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Evans
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I visited all classes to watch learning and, where appropriate, talk with pupils about their work and experience of school. I was accompanied by you or a member of your leadership team in three quarters of these visits. I scrutinised a wide range of pupils' books and folders of work. I also watched an act of collective worship. I spoke with you, governors, the SENCo and a representative of the local authority. I spoke with a diocesan officer on the telephone. I observed and spoke informally with pupils at the start and end of the day and during break and lunchtime. I spoke with parents at the start and end of the day. I met with eight Year 4 pupils formally to discuss their views of the school. I also listened to and discussed reading with

four Year 3 pupils. I took into account the 44 text messages from parents and the views of the 47 parents who responded to Ofsted's online facility, Parent View. I read a range of documents about the school's progress, safeguarding systems, monitoring, staff training and governors' work.