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Mrs Emma Hunt
Headteacher
The St Gilbert of Sempringham Church of England Primary School
West Road
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Dear Mrs Hunt

Short inspection of The St Gilbert of Sempringham Church of England Primary School, Pointon

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 June 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 are a dedicated and determined leader, who has high regard for the pupils, staff and parents at your school. You have managed significant changes since the last inspection, and ensured that your unwavering commitment to the school's improvement has remained on course.

You have a loyal team, which is committed to raising standards at the school. Staff ensure that learning is fun and captures pupils' interests. Pupils have opportunities to extend their learning through a range of enrichment activities, such as visits to local museums and places of interest. In particular, younger children get off to a flying start in the early years at your school. The Nursery leader is a capable practitioner and plans activities which follow children's interests, such as exploring wildlife at the local park.

Pupils are confident and enthusiastic learners. They value the support they receive from a range of adults in the school. They know the importance of the school's values of honesty, being hardworking and helpful in school. Pupils know that these values will support them to be the best that they can be. They appreciate the responsibilities they have as members of the elected school council. Members of the school council have purchased additional playground equipment and clocks for the outdoor areas. Pupils also enjoy looking after the school's guinea pigs, Salt and Pepper. They are thoughtful pupils, kind and considerate to each other. Where pupils have faced difficulties, they have valued the support they received from a range of adults.

You respond promptly to the letters posted in the 'headteacher's worry bag'. Pupils speak warmly of your kindness and the care you have shown to ensure that they are happy.

Parents speak highly of the help and support they receive from you and the staff. They value the care and attention their children receive, particularly those parents whose children have medical issues. They are reassured that their children are in safe hands.

Since the last inspection, you have ensured that the quality of teaching in Years 2 and 3 has improved. You have appointed new teachers and ensure that where there are new staff, they are mentored effectively by a senior teacher. The information about pupils' achievement shows that pupils across the school are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. You have regular monitoring activities in place to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is effective. Teachers use effectively opportunities in lessons for pupils to practise their reading skills.

The mathematics leader, who is also the senior teacher, has ensured that staff have received training to develop pupils' skills in solving mathematical problems. Pupils' books show they now have regular opportunities to use and apply their mathematics skills, resulting in their increasing mastery of this aspect of the subject. Pupils make good progress in mathematics across the school.

Some teachers do not consistently provide tasks to meet the needs of the most able pupils across the school, particularly in writing. Tasks are not always designed and adapted well enough to ensure that the most able pupils make the progress of which they are capable. At times, writing tasks are too easy.

Pupils do receive a range of opportunities to practise their writing skills. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have opportunities to do this in a range of styles and contexts, for example descriptions about life in ancient Egypt. Pupils' topic books in Years 3 and 4 show they have opportunities to use and apply their skills when writing about visits to the local church. Pupils' work displayed around the school shows they have broad and varied opportunities to practise their writing skills. Information about pupils' achievement shows that they make good progress in writing. Teaching assistants working alongside class teachers provide effective writing skills support for pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Over time, you have developed positive relationships with parents and their children. Where families face difficulties, you are able to direct or refer them to a range of services. You and the staff are knowledgeable about roles and responsibilities to safeguard the pupils in your care. You provide regular training and updates for the team. Where there are concerns, you deal with them swiftly and make prompt referrals. Your paperwork shows that you are diligent when managing concerns, and ensure that it is well organised and detailed.

Pupils feel safe and are confident that staff will manage concerns they may have. They told me that they are confident teachers will help them. Pupils know how the school

keeps them safe. They receive regular visits from the local police officer, who ensures that pupils know how to keep safe in the local community. Pupils also promote important road safety messages in their roles as the school's road safety officers. Also, they have visits from organisations that teach them the importance of positive relationships. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep safe online. They have created e-safety posters and know that should they have a concern they must report it to adults immediately.

Inspection findings

- Since the previous inspection, you have worked effectively to address the areas for improvement as well as improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school. You know that some areas still require further work and you are ensuring that training is in place to support staff. You have clearly identified these areas in your school improvement planning.
- During the inspection, you and I looked at the provision for phonics in Years 1 and 2. You are aware that for the past two years the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been below average. We noticed that further training is required for staff to ensure that they develop fully pupils' phonics skills. We also noted that pupils' groupings might need to be considered more carefully, so that pupils receive appropriate support in lessons. At times, adults do not support pupils well enough to develop their phonic knowledge. You know this is a school priority and you have already arranged further training.
- Together, we looked at pupils' learning during lessons and sampled a range of pupils' books. We noted that not all teachers design and adapt tasks consistently to meet the needs of the most able pupils in writing. Consequently, some tasks are too easy and pupils are not challenged consistently enough. You recognise that there is further work to be done to ensure that teachers support the needs of the most able pupils. Some staff have attended training to develop their knowledge and understanding of teaching grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils' workbooks show that they are able to use and apply their grammar skills effectively. You are also providing bespoke support to a newly qualified teacher.
- Pupils' workbooks show that disadvantaged pupils make good progress because they are supported effectively. For example, they receive extra support in reading and writing. Supporting adults are aware of these pupils' needs and provide resources to help them succeed in their reading and writing tasks. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is monitored well. For example, the Years 5 and 6 teacher closely checks on pupils' learning throughout the lesson and works with other adults to ensure that pupils' needs are met well.
- The governing body has managed the school well, despite there being vacancies for some time on the governing body. The responsibilities of the governing body have, therefore, not been widely distributed. Nevertheless, governors have effectively managed the building of a new classroom necessary to accommodate the increase in the number of pupils on roll. Despite the challenges faced by the governing body, it remains eager and passionate to build on the school's success. The governing body recognises that some governors have not yet fully developed their skills and expertise and require training to further support the school's future.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- adults develop further their knowledge and skills, so pupils are able to use and apply accurately their phonics skills
- teachers design and adapt tasks to meet the needs of the most able pupils in writing, in order that they make faster progress and a greater proportion achieve the higher standard at the end of key stage 1
- governors' skills and expertise are further developed so they are able to challenge leaders consistently.

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

Emma Nuttall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and I also met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with parents before school and with a group of pupils about their school experience. Jointly with you, I visited all classes and we sampled pupils' books. In addition, I checked the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the school's record of recruitment checks on staff. I evaluated the school's documentation about pupils' achievement, planning for improvement and attendance. I met with the English and mathematics subject leaders and phonics leader. I took account of the 24 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 15 responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text service. There were no responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff or pupils for me to consider.