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Mrs Sarah Moore  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Moore

### **Short inspection of Elsworth Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 27 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 October 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, your deputy headteacher and governors have worked with determination and commitment to make sure that the school has continued to move forward since the last inspection.

Staff work together well. Their responses to the inspection questionnaire show that they understand your vision for the school. Underpinning all of your work is the new motto for the school, 'We work, we play, we care, we pray.' This drive to respond fully to the academic, social, spiritual and emotional needs of your pupils is reflected in all aspects of the school's work.

You monitor provision carefully and have a good understanding of the next steps that are needed for the school to improve further. You know that teaching is particularly strong in the combined Year 4/5 and Year 5/6 classes. Together we saw that teachers have especially high expectations in these classes. We agreed that it would be helpful to share some of this extremely good practice more widely across the school.

Your pupils flourish both socially and academically and are a credit to the school. Pupils are friendly, confident and articulate. They behave extremely sensibly throughout the school day, including when attending the well organised after-school club, 'The Den'.

Pupils are keen to learn and thoroughly enjoy school. They are especially positive about your music and sport provision. For example, older pupils recall with pleasure their recent visit to London to sing with children from other schools.

You are preparing pupils well for the next stage of their education and for later life. The levels of confidence seen by the time pupils reach Year 6 show how successfully the school nurtures the whole child. You and your staff model and teach key values such as tolerance, respect and kindness. You give pupils many opportunities to take responsibility by being play leaders, librarians, worship leaders and school councillors. Pupils take these responsibilities very seriously and carry them out extremely conscientiously.

Parents are very positive about the school, especially about the quality of care given to their children and the good start to school life in the early years. Parents typically told me that they like the school because it is 'like a family'.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Senior leaders and the governing body ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, give safeguarding the highest priority. They ensure that staff are well trained and know what to do if they have a concern. The school is diligent in utilising outside agencies when necessary to support vulnerable pupils. You regularly review procedures and make changes if needed. For example, the school has recently improved site security to address concerns that it had identified for itself.

Pupils are clear about what the school does to keep them safe. They talk knowledgeably about e-safety and how their 'E-Cadets' help them to understand some of the potential pitfalls of using the internet. Pupils express full confidence in the response of staff if they have a concern. As one commented, 'There is always someone to talk to if I am worried about anything.'

### **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, we met together to confirm the key lines of enquiry for my day in school in order to ascertain whether the school remained good.
- The first of these concerned pupils' progress in key stage 1. I looked at this because of the dip in attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2017. You showed me how you have strengthened assessment procedures this year to make sure that any potential underachievement is identified and dealt with more quickly than in the past.
- The school's own assessments and the quality of work in pupils' books show that attainment in the current Year 2 is improving, with more on track to reach or exceed the expected standards for their age than last year. This reflects good progress from pupils' differing starting points.
- I saw that you are deploying additional staff well to give pupils in Year 3 extra support to help them catch up. Their work shows that progress is already

improving, although you know that this support will need to be maintained over the whole academic year and possibly beyond.

- When we observed lessons and looked at pupils' books in Years 1 to 4, we saw that while there is good challenge for the most able, teachers are sometimes too slow to respond when the less able are struggling with their work and need more help. We agreed that this should be a focus for improvement in your development planning.
- The second line of enquiry looked at pupils' progress in writing. This was because pupils' attainment in writing has, historically, been slightly lower than in reading and mathematics across the school. I found that this continues to be the case in the current year, largely due to inaccuracies in spelling. While most pupils are enthusiastic writers, they are sometimes careless when spelling. You agreed that teachers do not have consistently high expectations in this area. The best writing is seen in Years 5 and 6, with most pupils showing good skills. For example, their recent writing about the Winter Olympics is well structured and engaging to its audience.
- My third line of enquiry looked at the impact of middle leaders, because they are new to their roles. Your new leaders in English and mathematics have hit the ground running. They have quickly established a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses across the school. They are playing a good part in driving improvement. Recent initiatives are based on a good understanding of the next steps for improving provision in their subjects. For example, a recently adopted mathematics project is already having a good effect on pupils' confidence in solving problems quickly.
- My final line of enquiry for the school looked at provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. This was because information provided before the inspection indicated that the school has no such pupils. This is not the case, and it is clear that there has been a clerical error in submitting information to the relevant bodies.
- I found that the school has secure systems for identifying and supporting pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. You and your staff work well with parents and with pupils to set the right targets for improvement that are well matched to their individual needs. These have a good effect on learning over time and ensure that these pupils make good progress.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the accuracy of pupils' spelling is improved
- teachers respond quickly when less-able pupils are finding work too difficult
- there are more opportunities to share more widely across the school the best practice seen in the Year 4/5 and Year 5/6 classes.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Ely, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mike Capper  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I made observations of teaching and learning across the school during learning walks with you and your deputy headteacher. I held meetings with school leaders and members of the governing body. I had discussions with parents at the start of the school day and scrutinised the 54 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I analysed the 14 responses to the Ofsted staff survey. I considered a range of information supplied by the school, including checks on the quality of teaching, the school's development plan, school policies and records relating to attendance and safeguarding procedures. I listened to some pupils reading in lessons and scrutinised pupils' books in different subjects and school assessment information from the current academic year.