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Mr Karl Duke
Headteacher
Blyton Cum Laughton Church of England School
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Dear Mr Duke

Short inspection of Blyton Cum Laughton Church of England 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. In September 2016 you joined the school as the headteacher. You are a motivated and dynamic leader, keen to provide the best education possible for all pupils. Recently, you have appointed a new English and mathematics leader. You and the staff team have accurately identified areas for further improvement and have comprehensive plans in place. The staff team is highly engaged in school improvement and keen to further improve the school's provision to meet the needs of all pupils. You have identified your team's strengths well so that the school's provision can be further developed.

At the time of the last inspection, the school was asked to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that all pupils make excellent progress. In particular, the school was asked to develop pupils' ability to work things out for themselves to help them to attain at the highest levels. Together, during this inspection, we saw how pupils were highly engaged in their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils' learning effectively by asking challenging questions that enable pupils to deepen their understanding. For example, in the Reception class, the class teacher challenged children to think carefully of words with a specific sound. The children shared readily their ideas with great success. In classrooms, teachers support pupils to work things out for themselves through eye-catching displays which prompt pupils' recall of key mathematical skills, and using challenging vocabulary to support pupils' writing skills. Pupils use this information well to support them when they work on their own or together.

Pupils are confident and self-assured because they are given a range of opportunities to develop their personal, spiritual, social and academic skills. They participate in a range of clubs and visits which enhance the curriculum. Pupils and staff emanate the school's values of 'happy, caring and achieving'. As one pupil said, 'It is important to think of others. If we're not happy and well cared for, we won't achieve.' Pupils are thoughtful and considerate towards each other, willing to share their thoughts and ideas. They value the support provided by a range of adults in the school.

Staff at Blyton-cum Laughton are proud to be part of the school. They feel well supported by you and feel the school is a positive place to be.

Parents and carers speak highly of your leadership and the care shown by staff. They commented on the improved security measures that you have put quickly in place. Parents feel their children are well supported and safe.

Governors have a high level of expertise to support the work of the school. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They make regular visits to the school to check on the impact of actions taken to improve aspects of provision and pupils' performance. They use the school's information incisively to challenge and support you to further develop the school. For example, shortly after your appointment, you and the governing body identified the need to improve the school's perimeter fences and promptly ensured that this was dealt with quickly.

During our tour of the school, we noted that in some classes teachers were not effectively promoting pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills. Where this was done successfully, pupils' books show they use their problem-solving skills well and explain clearly their answers. You and the mathematics leader explained that this is an area that you are currently developing. The mathematics leader has monitored effectively the quality of teaching and learning. She has provided training to staff and has aptly identified this as an area of further development.

In some mathematics lessons, we saw that pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Teachers do not design consistently learning tasks that meet the needs of the most able pupils. These pupils' books show that they are spending too much time on work that is too easy for them. The mathematics leader knows this is an area for further development. She has provided bespoke support for teachers to ensure that they move pupils' learning on more quickly in mathematics lessons, particularly that of the most able.

Together, we noticed that some pupils do not always present their work to the highest standard. You and the staff have plans in place to ensure that this is dealt with swiftly.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have engaged with a range of external agencies to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support. You are responsive to pupils' needs and support their families effectively. Where there are concerns, you meet with families to ensure they receive appropriate

support. Staff and governors are trained appropriately and know well their roles and responsibilities. Staff refer any concerns promptly to trained safeguarding leaders. Documents are well organised and outcomes are clearly recorded. Your records show that you respond swiftly to any concerns. You record outcomes in detail from actions taken by staff and external agencies.

Staff and governors receive regular training, this includes information about extremism. Office staff at both sites ensure that rigorous checks are in place when visitors enter the school building. Pupils know how the school keeps them safe and they have received e-safety training from the Stay Safe Partnership team at Lincolnshire County Council. Pupils receive regular reminders in class about anti-bullying and know that it can happen online. They are reassured that should they have a concern, an adult will always help them. You have recently appointed a learning mentor who supports vulnerable pupils across the school. She is highly skilled in supporting pupils' emotional needs so they are able to settle well in school.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I looked at the quality of teaching in phonics. I also looked at the quality of teaching and learning for boys' writing and for girls in mathematics.
- Together, we visited phonics lessons. You explained that in 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was below the national average, particularly for girls. Those pupils who did not achieve the expected standard are receiving additional support to help them with their phonics and early reading skills. You have appointed a skilled English and phonics leader. She has monitored closely the provision for phonics and taken effective action to ensure that staff teach phonics accurately, so pupils make faster progress. Teachers and teaching assistants use a range of resources to ensure that phonics lessons are lively and interesting. For example, teaching assistants in Year 1 supported pupils effectively to master middle sounds using pictures, rhymes and magnetic letters. Vulnerable pupils, in particular, are supported well in these lessons. You and the English leader are tracking pupils' progress carefully to ensure that progress is sustained.
- During the inspection, we looked at pupils' assessment information and pupils' workbooks. You explained that not enough boys achieved the expected standard in writing at the end of Year 2. You and the English leader are carefully tracking these pupils' performance to ensure that they make faster progress. We sampled a range of pupils' books which showed that boys, in particular, are making good progress. Teachers provide interesting writing tasks which further develop pupils' ability to write on their own without regular adult guidance. For example, pupils write for a purpose, such as writing descriptions of fossils based on a visit from a fossil expert. Pupils have also contributed to a local exhibition with another local school. They enjoyed writing a response to a picture book about 'Malala's magic pencil'. You and the staff have further plans to improve the curriculum using children's story books as the central theme of the curriculum for writing.
- You and the mathematics leader have rightly identified the need to improve the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics. You have a comprehensive action

plan in place, which focuses upon developing staff expertise in teaching problem-solving and reasoning. The mathematics leader is carefully tracking pupils' attainment and progress, particularly those girls, to ensure that they are making good progress. She knows that the proportion of girls achieving the expected standards for their age at the end of key stage 1 needs to be larger. She provides bespoke support to staff as well as providing whole-school training. She has recently reviewed the school's planning and mathematics curriculum to ensure it is meeting the needs of all pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers design appropriate tasks that challenge the most able pupils in mathematics
- teachers ensure that pupils better use and apply their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics
- teachers encourage pupils to more consistently present their work to the highest standard.

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 five governors, including the vice-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. I took account of the 32 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 14 responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text service. There were 12 responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and 44 responses from pupils for me to consider.