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Mrs Christine Dorian-Hurst
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dorian-Hurst

Short inspection of Arnesby Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 September 2013.

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 a much-valued part of the local community. Parents, pupils, staff and governors appreciate the ethos of tangible care that is a hallmark of the school.

You make maintaining a community focus a priority, but also ensure that the school looks outward. You work actively within an established network of schools, to ensure that staff are regularly involved in moderation and training beyond the school. You also use external links well, to involve pupils in a range of experiences that widen their horizons.

Governors know the school well. They have a range of useful skills that contribute effectively to school leadership. Governors take time to come into school to participate in school events. They check the improvements that are being made so they can find out for themselves if the improvements are successful.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve some aspects of teaching and learning further. You have provided staff with effective training and resources. Teachers regularly work with colleagues from other schools, to compare approaches and share good practice. You recognise that, as a small school, collaboration with other schools is particularly important. You have successfully sustained good teaching across the school.

The small numbers and different characteristics of pupils in year groups limit the reliability of comparing the school's results in national assessments with national averages. However, it is possible to say that outcomes in mathematics have been consistently stronger across the school over time. Outcomes in writing dipped in 2016. However, you ensured that teachers adjusted their expectations and planning to better align with national expectations. This secured some improvement in 2017, particularly at key stage 1. You recognise that there is still work to be done, particularly in relation to writing and rates of progress across key stage 2.

Leaders were also asked at the time of the previous inspection to develop the school's curriculum plan. You ensure that interesting topics are used effectively to drive learning across subjects. The school also offers a wide range of activities to engage and enthuse pupils. Pupils were keen to tell me about the many exciting opportunities that they enjoy, such as an annual school musical and a community dance festival. During the inspection, a number of boys were buzzing with enthusiasm upon returning from an author-led workshop with other primary and secondary pupils. Girls were also very enthusiastic about their recent involvement in an engineering project with the University of Leicester and Jaguar Cars.

Pupils behave well and show positive attitudes and mutual respect throughout the school day. They are proud of their welcoming and friendly school. They relish taking on roles such as school councillors and junior road-safety officers. Pupils who responded to the online pupil questionnaire stated that they feel particularly well-supported in becoming independent and responsible. Pupils' enthusiasm for school is evident in their attendance being consistently better than national averages over many years.

Parents are unanimous in valuing the caring staff and the interesting experiences provided for their children. All parents spoken to and who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed the school ensures that their children are happy, safe and well looked after.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You make sure that all the appropriate vetting checks take place before an adult starts working at the school, and that staff receive up-to-date training in safeguarding. Staff are clear about how to report a concern about a child's welfare should one arise. Governors also receive appropriate training and attend staff training sessions. They regularly check school procedures.

Safeguarding records are clear and stored securely. You are tenacious in seeking support from other agencies, to ensure that pupils and their families get help when needed. You and your staff discuss matters of safeguarding and pupils' welfare at every staff meeting, keeping this important aspect of the school's work at the forefront of everyone's mind.

Pupils said that behaviour is good in school. On the rare occasions when there is inappropriate behaviour, pupils trust adults to help them deal with it. Pupils said they use the skills the school has taught them to resolve minor disagreements themselves. Pupils are taught about different aspects of safety, such as fire safety and water safety skills. All pupils are taught about keeping themselves safe online.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, you and I agreed aspects of the school's work that we would consider closely. The first of these was looking at how well the school has adapted what is being taught to ensure that pupils successfully reach national standards, especially in key stage 2. You have well-established monitoring procedures, including checking on teaching and regular discussions about how well pupils are progressing. Teachers ensure that pupils are attentive in learning and confident in contributing their ideas to discussions. Classrooms are all well-equipped, attractive spaces. Imaginative displays heighten pupils' interest in class topics. We saw that teachers are effectively planning lessons that introduce pupils to content that is appropriate for their age. However, in classes and books pupils are not making more rapid progress because teachers are not consistently using assessment to guide pupils on how to build on what they know.
- We looked closely at pupils' progress in writing. You have taken steps to revise the spelling programme and handwriting policy. This is having a positive impact across the school, with pupils' books showing increasing accuracy and good presentation. Teachers are consistently providing purposeful writing opportunities, linked to interesting topics and quality texts. For example, Year 4 pupils were enthusiastically mapping out and dramatising a Mayan myth. Pupils told me it was helping them 'to really understand the story'. Teachers ensure that pupils are taught grammar through specific tasks appropriate for their age. However, teachers are not as skilled at helping pupils to know how to use this knowledge to improve their writing and deepen their understanding.
- You have identified that boys' progress is often not as rapid as girls' progress within the school. You are providing specific opportunities to boost boys' engagement, such as the author visit that was seen happening during the inspection. You have also brought in inspirational visitors, such as an explorer and outdoor specialist. You aim to raise aspirations for all, but have particularly considered role models that will appeal to boys. However, you recognise there is further work to do to ensure that teachers use assessment accurately to support less confident learners to make more rapid progress.
- You are currently reviewing how pupils' progress is tracked. You have procedures that ensure that teachers know what pupils need to learn to reach expected standards. Leaders and teachers are more accurately identifying gaps in learning and pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Leaders have used this information to make sure that pupils who need support are receiving it. External checks of the assessments made by teachers have helped them to gain a clearer understanding of what pupils need to learn next. You are in the process of putting in place further changes to improve the efficient retrieval and analysis of information. You

have rightly identified that assessment information is not yet being used well enough to increase the rate of progress made by pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers give pupils clear guidance on how to use grammar and punctuation to refine and improve their writing
- leaders use revised assessment procedures to generate more precise planning that helps to accelerate pupils' progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Mandy Wilding
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and shared my lines of enquiry. I also met the deputy headteacher, the upper key stage 2 teacher and a teacher who is new to the profession. I met with five governors, including the vice-chair. I held a telephone conversation with a member of the school's peer-review group. I spoke with pupils informally in class and held a more formal meeting with all pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6.

We jointly visited classes to observe pupils learning, to speak with them and to look at their books. I also jointly visited some classes with the deputy headteacher. I examined a range of pupils' books from across the school.

I viewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance and its plans for further improvement. I considered a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding. I examined the school's website and checked on the publication of specified information. I spoke to parents at the end of the school day and considered the responses of 14 parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 13 free-text comments. I also considered responses from parents to school questionnaires. I scrutinised the responses to Ofsted's questionnaires from 10 staff and 12 pupils.