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22 March 2018

Mrs Laura Green
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Green

Short inspection of Tacolneston Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 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. The school is well led and managed. You work very effectively with the deputy headteacher. Together, you aspire for the very best for your pupils.

Your evaluation of how well the school is doing is realistic. There was nothing identified in the inspection that you did not know about. You were able to discuss what actions had already taken place and what the impact of these had been. At times, though, the plans for what will happen are not specific enough. This is due to some middle leaders being new to their role. You have recognised this and have begun to put measures in place to support them.

Staff and governors share your unwavering commitment and determination to provide the best possible learning experiences for pupils. Staff have every confidence in the school's leadership and morale is high. All of the staff say that they are proud of the school and enjoy working there. A real strength is how well you, all leaders and staff know the pupils. One parent commented, 'It is clear that every single teacher and adult cares deeply for each and every child in the school.'

The school provides a happy and vibrant learning environment in which pupils feel safe, are well cared for, and are encouraged to do their very best. Pupils enjoy school; attendance is above the national average and continues to improve. Pupils are exceptionally well mannered and articulate. They show great kindness and support towards one another.

At the last inspection, leaders were asked to accelerate the progress in writing and to make more teaching outstanding. The inspection evidence showed the quality and quantity of work in pupils' books, and in displays around the school, indicate that the teaching of writing is improving. The effective partnership between the two federated schools has given staff the opportunity to work together and share effective practice and expertise, which ensures a rich and varied curriculum.

When children do fall behind, your staff are swift to put in additional support so that any misconceptions are tackled at an early stage. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, commented positively about the progress that their children make and the good relationships they have with teaching staff.

Governors share leaders' accurate knowledge of the school. There is an open relationship between governors and leaders. This allows for constructive challenge and support. Governors are continually pushing forward with improvements and have a well-founded confidence in leaders' ability to deliver success. Governors have a sound vision for the school and this is reflected in their decision-making. For example, the decision to build a new Reception classroom was a direct result of their understanding of the needs of the pupils entering the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

All staff are aware of the safeguarding expectations and clear about all aspects of child protection. They take responsibility for raising concerns and create a safe place and ethos for the pupils. You have a very good understanding of the role of the designated safeguarding lead. School records show clearly that leaders take timely and appropriate action to protect children when necessary.

Pupils are happy and safe in school. They said that any poor behaviour is dealt with well by staff and that bullying never occurs. Pupils said that they feel well cared for and confident to talk to adults if they feel worried. They are taught about potential risks and how to stay safe in different situations. These include how to use the internet safely and dangers from strangers.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we agreed some particular areas to explore in more detail. The first was to look at how leaders are working across the two schools to continue to improve writing. The use of writing progress books is showing the impact of this joint working. The focus has not only been on staff training, but also on developing the writing stamina of pupils. It is too soon to see the impact of this, but early indications are positive.
- In addition, you are developing your marking and feedback policy, which has been changed for Year 2 upwards. Your own evaluation of the impact that this is having is that it is deepening pupils' understanding and supporting teaching and learning going forward.
- Second, we focused on how well leaders are helping to improve the progress of

pupils across the school. You are ensuring that further improvement to teaching is at the heart of the school's work. You check teaching regularly in a range of ways, including observing lessons and looking at pupils' work. You have an accurate picture of teaching throughout the school. You are taking swift action to remedy any weaknesses, providing appropriate support, challenge, advice or training where needed. As a result, teaching is effective.

- In all classes, well targeted support from additional adults aids pupils' learning. They use their knowledge of the pupils and offer support and intervention in a timely manner.
- A number of actions have been taken to improve outcomes. For example, staff have been trained in deepening pupils' understanding of mathematics so that they are challenged more. You have rightly identified that not all teaching challenges pupils of all abilities well enough. In particular, the most able pupils do not always make as much progress as they should.
- Third, we also talked about your vision for developing a more distributed leadership team in order to make the most of people's skills and to ensure consistency of high standards across the school. We agreed that this could help to strengthen the capacity of the leadership team to drive forward improvements.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching challenges the most able pupils sufficiently
- they support new middle leaders in planning effectively to bring about improvements in their areas
- more distributed leadership brings about greater consistency of high standards throughout the school

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

Yours sincerely

Susannah Connell
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, other senior leaders, a selection of staff, the chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I observed learning in all classes jointly with you as headteacher and with the deputy headteacher. During these visits to lessons, I spoke with children and pupils and looked at their work, including in their books. I observed pupils' behaviour when

they arrived at the school, during which time I also spoke with parents. I met with a selection of pupils; I also spoke with pupils informally when I observed behaviour at breaktime. I examined a range of documents, including those related to safeguarding, attendance, pupils' attainment and progress, and the school's use of the pupil premium funding. I also took into account the school's self-evaluation and its improvement plan. I scrutinised the school's recruitment procedures and records of the checks made on new staff and volunteers. I took into account the 42 responses to Parent View, including the 32 responses to the free-text service. I considered the nine responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 38 responses to the pupil survey.