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Mrs Christine Adams
Headteacher
Penwortham Middleforth Church of England Primary School
Hill Road South
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Dear Mrs Adams

Short inspection of Penwortham Middleforth Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 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 November 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 lead a happy and welcoming school. The school's Christian values contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. You teach pupils to be generous to others and to always try their best. Staff help pupils to realise the school's motto, to 'Let your light shine'.

Your appointment and that of your deputy headteacher have strengthened teaching across the school. You have accurately identified the school's strengths and areas for improvement. You place a high priority on staff development and have enabled teachers to work collaboratively and learn from other schools and specialists. You have taken the right steps to improve the progress that key stage 2 pupils make in writing and mathematics. You have put in place well-planned and effective training and this is already having an impact.

Governors share your high ambitions for the school. They have an accurate view of your steps to improve teaching and learning. Governors know the school well as they visit frequently. They provide just the right balance of challenge and support for you and your staff. Governors have correctly identified that they need to keep a careful check on the progress of disadvantaged pupils across the school.

The vast majority of parents and carers are very positive about the school. Those who spoke to me at the start of the school day or who responded to Parent View,

Ofsted's online questionnaire, said that leaders have improved the school. They appreciate the nurturing and inclusive environment that staff provide.

Pupils share parents' positive view of the school. This is because they find the curriculum interesting and enjoy the trips and visits that you provide. Pupils relish the many leadership opportunities that you give them, including the school council and eco council. Through these experiences, they develop confidence and a strong sense of responsibility. You teach pupils that everyone is equal and to value and respect each other. Pupils in Year 5 were keen to share how they had used sign language as part of a recent choir performance.

In response to the previous inspection, leaders have made sure that the school has clear and measurable targets in the school's development plan. You share these with teachers who know exactly what the school is doing to improve. Leaders were also asked to improve the pace of lessons. Evidence from the school's monitoring records and observations during the inspection indicate that teachers plan engaging lessons and use questioning effectively to check how well pupils are learning. Across the school, pupils show concentration and enthusiasm. This means that no learning time is lost.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have made sure that safeguarding arrangements are thorough and fit for purpose. They carry out statutory checks on the suitability of staff to work with children. Leaders have taken effective actions to ensure that the school is a safe and secure place in which pupils can learn. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, both online and in the wider community.

Through regular training, staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding. They are vigilant about the potential risks that pupils may face. Records relating to pupils' welfare are appropriate. Leaders work closely with parents and other professionals to make sure that pupils are safe.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry, the first of which related to how well the pupils in key stage 2 learn mathematics. As a result of recent changes, the quality of teaching in mathematics has improved. This is because staff have worked collaboratively to develop their subject knowledge and improve their teaching strategies. Teachers use questioning well to develop pupils' confidence and accuracy. Across key stage 2, pupils develop their understanding of number, calculations and problem solving. As a result, they make good progress. Leaders have taken steps to improve pupils' reasoning skills. However, these improvements are still at an early stage and not embedded across all key stage 2 classes.
- For my second key line of enquiry, I looked at how well teachers develop pupils' writing skills in key stage 2. Results for writing at the end of Year 6 in 2017 were below the national averages. You have taken swift action to address this. Staff

have received training to improve their skills in teaching writing. As a result of changes, standards are rising and most pupils in key stage 2 are making good progress in their writing. Staff are working closely with leaders and other professionals to make sure that standards continue to rise.

- Leaders and governors have carefully considered how to make the best use of the pupil premium funding to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils. You have improved strategies for teaching assistants to support disadvantaged pupils. Work in pupils' books and school-based assessment information show that disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points and receive the support that they need. You and your governors have correctly identified that the school now needs to carefully monitor the impact of recent improvements and check that pupils continue to make the progress that they should.
- Subject leaders are passionate about their curriculum areas of responsibility and have good subject knowledge. They use this knowledge to support staff to improve their teaching. As a result of staff changes, some subject leaders are new to their roles. You have put in place appropriate training opportunities and support. As a result, subject leaders are developing their skills and having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in mathematics, teachers give pupils in key stage 2 more opportunities to develop their reasoning skills
- they build on the effective actions already taken to enhance the good progress that key stage 2 pupils make in writing
- they analyse and report on the impact of the pupil premium funding with greater accuracy and rigour.

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Stevens
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and the English leaders. I also met with seven governors, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke to a representative of the local authority. I met with eight pupils from

key stage 2 and heard pupils from Years 2 and 6 read. I visited classes with you, where we observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils.

I spoke to parents at the start of the school day and took account of the 45 responses to Parent View and the free-text responses from parents. I also considered the 17 staff responses and the 68 pupil responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, information about pupils' attainment and progress, teachers' performance management arrangements and pupils' personal education plans. I also evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep pupils safe, safeguarding checks and attendance information, and I undertook a review of the school's website.