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Mrs Zoe Hyams  
Executive Headteacher  
Caistor Church of England and Methodist Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Hyams

### **Short inspection of Caistor Church of England and Methodist Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 24 April 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. School leaders have high aspirations for all pupils, a view that is shared by all staff and governors, and the vast majority of parents and carers. Teaching across the school remains good and it is regularly monitored by yourself and other leaders, including the deputy headteacher and subject leaders.

You have a good understanding of the school's strengths and recognise the areas that are in need of further improvement. These are clearly detailed in the school development plan.

Since the last inspection, the school has formed a formal federation with Grasby All Saints Church of England Primary School. You have ensured that this is advantageous for the school by organising training activities where teachers are able to learn from each other and share best practice such as through 'lesson study'. You have also provided opportunities for teachers to moderate their assessments of pupils' work across the federation and with other schools that you have forged links with.

Governors are knowledgeable and passionate about their roles. Governors that I met confidently explained to me how they monitor the outcomes for pupils, particularly for those pupils who are disadvantaged. They receive good information about the

quality of teaching and outcomes in different subjects. Governors perform their strategic role very effectively.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils listen intently to staff, follow instructions very quickly and work hard. They are polite, enthusiastic and friendly and enjoy coming to school. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. One pupil commented, 'I like coming to this school: I don't think there's been a day where I haven't had something to look forward to.' Pupils say that they find it easy to ask for help and consider their teachers approachable and helpful.

Parents speak highly of the school and appreciate the care and effort that staff put into educating and nurturing their children. One parent wrote, 'Staff work tirelessly to support and develop the children and genuinely care about their outcomes.' The vast majority of parents who made their views known reported that they would recommend this school to others.

Leaders have taken action to address the areas of weakness identified at the last inspection but there is more work to do. Pupils are now set more challenging work and are encouraged to think more deeply, but in some classes opportunities to do this towards the end of a lesson are missed. These improvements are the result of training for teachers and teaching assistants to establish what pupils should know by the end of each year. In addition, half-termly meetings about pupils' progress check whether pupils are being challenged so that they learn swiftly. A new system to track pupils' progress has added greater rigour to these meetings.

Subject leaders are well trained and well informed. Core subject leaders are now more involved in promoting good teaching and are regularly analysing data, observing teaching and providing support to teachers and teaching assistants.

The last inspection also asked the school to identify and promote opportunities for parents to support their children's learning. The school has adopted a project-based approach to learning. At the end of each term, parents are invited to 'exhibitions' of the resulting work with their children. Phonics workshops for the parents have been organised and well received by parents. The mathematics leader has set up mathematics activities for pupils to tackle with their parents after school. This has helped parents to understand the methods and equipment that pupils use in school. Annual safeguarding information events are well attended by parents as are a wealth of community-focused events such as Irish dancing performances and folk group workshops. An annual school camping weekend attracts around 40 families.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that safeguarding processes are fit for purpose and effective. Systems are simple and clear and all staff understand their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the safety of pupils. Records are detailed and well maintained. All staff and governors have received up-to-date training and are aware of current risks to children. Staff know the procedures for reporting to you, or to the deputy designated safeguarding leader. Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for in school. They

report that incidents of bullying are rare but are confident that staff would act quickly should any occur.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders are aware that the rates of progress and attainment in writing and mathematics, particularly for the most able pupils, are not as good as they should be for pupils in key stage 2. You have put strategies in place to help remedy this and your current data indicates that this is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' writing and mathematics skills.
- You have introduced a new approach to teaching mathematics with a greater emphasis on problem-solving and reasoning. Teachers now spend more time focusing on and teaching the most able group of pupils. Pupils' books show that this group of pupils are being challenged. During the inspection, I observed a group of Year 6 pupils tackling some difficult problems that involved them constructing pie charts and interpreting the information within them.
- Pupils report that they would appreciate even more challenge, for example towards the end of mathematics lessons when they are finishing their work. Some pupils are given additional challenging tasks but this is not standard practice across all classes. A number of pupils reported that they are asked to finish other work or to practise their times tables, which they may already know.
- The school's approach to writing involves pupils completing a 'cold' writing task and a further 'hot' or final piece after the features of that particular genre have been taught. Pupils receive a lot of help and support about how to organise and structure their writing and elements of punctuation, spelling and grammar are integrated well into these tasks. However, pupils' books show limited opportunities for pupils to practise writing at length. During discussions with pupils, many reported that they would like and benefit from more opportunities to do so.
- A focus of this inspection was to look at how well the school meets the needs of its disadvantaged pupils. You agreed with me that not enough disadvantaged pupils made rapid progress and attained at the highest standards at the end of key stage 2 by the end of the last academic year. Leaders and governors have allocated the school's resources to improve support for these pupils. Information available in school during the inspection indicates that this group of pupils are on track to do much better this year. You attribute this to closely analysing the gaps in this group's learning each half term and by closely monitoring the impact of extra support for these pupils. Your new assessment and tracking system enable you to do so effectively and leaders, teachers and support staff have become skilled at tailoring the correct approach for each individual disadvantaged pupil.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- disadvantaged pupils make faster progress so that a larger proportion are working at greater depth in all subject areas by the end of key stage 2

- the most able pupils attain the higher standard in mathematics and greater depth in writing by the end of key stage 2.

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

John Savage  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with pupils, staff and governors. I also spoke with a representative from the local authority. I had regular meetings with you and your deputy and we visited classrooms together to observe teaching. I looked at pupils' work in a range of subjects and year groups. I considered 48 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, 23 free-text responses from parents and additional verbal communications with parents at the start of the school day. I scrutinised a range of school documents, including records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and policies. I also looked at information published on the school website.