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Mrs Judith Williams  
Headteacher  
St Peter's Brafferton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Williams

### **Short inspection of St Peter's Brafferton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 26 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 February 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. St Peter's Brafferton Church of England Primary School is a school where pupils feel safe, and where parents believe their children are safe and happy. Since you arrived in the school in September 2017, pupils and parents are pleased with the work you have done to acknowledge bullying and, in doing so, to deal with it effectively. This means that bullying is now rare in school and pupils feel safe. When pupils and parents report concerns, they feel you listen to them and take immediate and fair action to resolve issues. Teaching is effective and pupils make good progress. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, who conduct themselves well at all times of the day, and who, overall, engage enthusiastically in their learning. Pupils are working increasingly independently due to strong modelling by teachers, who guide pupils clearly and intelligently to ensure that pupils know how to work out tasks without having to rely too much on adults. The impact of your work since your start has been strong and all stakeholders are keen to express their confidence in your work.

At the last inspection, inspectors identified two main areas for improvement, the first of which was to improve attainment in mathematics, which was falling behind reading and writing outcomes. Inspectors suggested that work needed to be more challenging for pupils and that opportunities to use and apply their mathematics skills needed to be increased to support pupils' progress. In this regard, the school has been effective and mathematics progress has improved. This can be seen in

recent published data for the school in 2017, as well as in the work of pupils currently in the school. Pupils regularly practise their skills in mathematics, including the speed of their mental calculations. They also use these skills in problem-solving activities to help them to apply their learning. As a result, pupils are working at a high level in mathematics and an increasing proportion of pupils are exceeding the expected standard for their age, across the school, including in the early years. The second area for improvement suggested at the last inspection was to improve the quality of leadership by ensuring that middle leaders played a more active role to support and improve aspects of the school's provision. The inspector specifically recommended that subject leaders were given more responsibility to oversee and monitor the quality of teaching within their area. Again, there have been clear improvements in this aspect of school life. Despite the school having a very small teaching staff, the leadership of the school is a shared responsibility and subject areas are well led, leading to good teaching and outcomes across the curriculum. The leadership of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, who are disadvantaged, and who are in the early years setting is also strong.

Leaders understand the school well, thanks to recent improvements made. You work closely with your leaders and other staff, as well as the governors and the local authority. You have quickly assessed the school's priorities for improvement and have identified a plan to ensure that the priorities can be implemented. For example, you have simplified the way information about pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is recorded. The new system makes it easier for all teachers to see which strategies work with individual pupils and what the pupils' specific needs are. The system also allows teachers to review the impact of their work and support for these pupils, which parents can also access easily. Parents' views are also recorded. Your rigorous checks of pupils' work and the quality of teaching, alongside incisive analysis of pupils' outcomes, have led to an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and how it could improve further. For example, you have identified issues around pupils' writing skills and the fact that too few pupils in recent years have exceeded the expected level for their age. You have also responded to these issues and writing is improving, although this remains an area for further development, as you acknowledge. This is partly because writing in some year groups is not well practised in different subjects across the curriculum and pupils do not write at length often enough, thus improving their stamina for writing.

Since the last inspection, attendance has remained high and there are few pupils who are regularly absent. Despite this, you remain well focused on these areas to make sure that pupils' attendance continues to be high. The work in this area is very personalised and allows you to keep close checks where attendance falls, even slightly. You demonstrate a keen understanding and knowledge of all the pupils in the school and where there are issues that can impede their progress at school. As parents, pupils and governors acknowledge, this attention to detail supports pupils' personal development and welfare, as well as the academic progress they make. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also a strength of the school in many ways. Pupils report that they benefit from regular trips which link in

with their learning. They report that they particularly like it when the whole school goes away together and it is clear that pupils from different age groups have very strong relationships. Among other things, such trips, as well as visitors to the school, help pupils understand about different faiths and cultures, including their own Christian faith. Pupils' work and the discussion I held with a group of pupils show that they have a very good understanding of Christian values, such as honesty, respect, fairness and tolerance. They can also link these to British values, which they understand well. They also see how these values are shared in many religions. The focus on values in school supports pupils' positive attitudes to learning and conduct. However, while pupils understand the importance of respect and tolerance with regard to different faiths and cultures, they are less knowledgeable about the different lifestyle choices people can make.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors ensure that pupils are safe. Staff are trained well and regularly. This means they know what to do if they are concerned about a pupil's safety. Policies are in place and easily accessible to staff and parents. There is also information around school so that pupils can see who they can speak to if they are worried about anything, including their safety. Policies are checked regularly to ensure that they are fit for purpose and that the statutory requirements are met. There have been recent changes to the systems in place in school to ensure that the site is safe for pupils. Detailed records of any issues concerning pupils' safety are kept securely by the school. Designated members of staff, and the governing body, check that all relevant information is checked and, where appropriate, external agencies are involved to support pupils. Such records help staff to have a full understanding of any issues where a pupil's safety has been a concern in the past. All staff's information is checked, including the information about their qualifications and suitability to work with children.

### **Inspection findings**

- During the inspection, I was interested to see if pupils' writing had improved. Since the last inspection, writing outcomes have not been consistently strong. This has also been an area of focus for you in school and new systems are supporting better writing in school. In most year groups, pupils are writing at length more often. As well as improving their stamina for writing, the extended writing also allows pupils to improve the range of vocabulary and punctuation they use. The regular writing practice helps pupils to spell and use punctuation and grammar more accurately.
- Furthermore, you have implemented a system for pupils to edit their writing. With some guidance from teachers, pupils review their writing and identify errors and ways in which they could further improve their work. This can mean replacing a word with a more sophisticated word, or simplifying a sentence to make it clearer. Over time, most pupils have become very skilled at this. As a result, they write more accurately in the first instance.
- However, in a very small number of year groups, writing is still not consistently strong. The opportunities to write at length are too limited and there are not

enough occasions for pupils to write across all areas of the curriculum. This also means the chances for pupils to edit their work, and become practised at this, are too restricted.

- In addition, as you acknowledge, pupils' presentation in writing is not always good enough. Pupils practise handwriting on a regular basis and their handwriting books show that these sessions help to make writing more even and neater. However, in writing books handwriting can deteriorate over time, meaning pupils do not always take enough pride in their learning.
- Another focus for the inspection was the opportunities for pupils to exceed the expected standard for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. The pupils generally arrive at the school with a level of development which is typical for their age. You are also very aware that standards could be higher and have led the focus on this. Training for staff has focused on ensuring that teaching challenges and pushes pupils so they make more rapid progress and reach higher levels of attainment.
- In addition, you have rigorously checked that teachers have been meeting pupils' needs closely in the tasks they provide. You have also checked that assessment of pupils' attainment is accurate. Training and assessment have had a good impact and, in all subjects and year groups, there is a much increased proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards.
- I wanted to see how well the early years provision was meeting children's needs. As with the rest of the school, too few children have been exceeding the expected levels of development in different areas of the curriculum, including in reading, writing and mathematics. The setting is strong, with a good curriculum and strong teaching. Assessment is accurate and is well used by adults who know how to push and challenge children, as well as ensure that they are confident and secure in the environment. Again, as in the rest of the school, there has been a significant increase in the proportion exceeding the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Another area I looked at was pupils' behaviour. There have been no exclusions in school since the last inspection. However, there have been some issues around bullying. Parents and pupils report that this was an ongoing issue at times and that concerns have not always been dealt with effectively. However, parents and pupils report that this has improved significantly this year and that bullying issues are taken seriously and, therefore, have reduced significantly.
- Pupils' conduct around school is always positive and the relationships between different age groups of pupils is particularly special. Older and younger pupils play and work together regularly. Attitudes to learning are also strong, on the whole. Pupils work hard and are well engaged in their studies. However, at times, presentation of work could be better.
- Governors understand their roles well. They have been committed to improving their impact on the school, especially in terms of challenging leaders and holding them to account. They have made improvements to their systems so that they have a good understanding of the information they are given and can then question leaders, as appropriate. This has contributed to the school's recent improvements.

- The local authority has worked closely with the school over the past 18 months. When the previous headteacher resigned, they also brokered support for the school from a local headteacher. This was very important and helped the school make improvements and to appoint a substantive headteacher.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all pupils across the school get the opportunity to write at length on a regular basis, and across the curriculum
- pupils present their work neatly at all times and, thus, take more pride in their learning
- pupils are given the chance to learn about and understand the different lifestyle choices people make.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona McNally  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I visited a number of classes in school to observe teaching and its impact on learning. I also looked at a wide range of pupils' books from several year groups, across a variety of subjects. I met with you and your governors and with other senior and middle leaders. I also held a discussion with a representative from the local authority. I looked at the school's information about the safeguarding of pupils and examined behaviour, attendance and bullying records. I also checked a range of other documentation, such as your self-evaluation, your school development plan and your monitoring information. I held formal discussions with pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 and spoke informally to pupils during breaktime. I also heard four pupils read from Year 2 and Year 6. I was unable to consider the parents' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, because there were too few responses. However, I did speak to a number of parents in the playground, as they dropped their children off at school.