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Miss Karen Boardman
Headteacher
Saint Barnabas Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
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Dear Miss Boardman

Short inspection of Saint Barnabas Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 3 May 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 January 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement, which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since the last inspection, there has been very little change in your teaching and leadership team. Your staff feel well supported by you. All of the 14 staff who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire said that they are proud and happy to work under your leadership. However, since the last inspection, you and your team have been acutely aware that there has been a decline in the quality of some teaching. You also acknowledge that subject leaders need to be more accountable for the quality of teaching and learning so that they make a more valuable contribution to school improvement. You and your leadership team are aware of the urgency with which you need to address these issues.

Forty parents responded both to the online Parent View and via the text facility. Parents commented on how warm and welcoming the school feels. Parents also commented on how 'approachable' staff are, including you, although some said that concerns are not always dealt with well enough. You have ensured that pupils' well-being is of paramount importance. A dedicated member of staff is responsible for pupils' pastoral care. Several parents and pupils made a special mention about this particular member of staff. Pupils commented that she was always there if they had any problems at home or in school and that she would make them feel better.

Pupils spoke particularly enthusiastically about how this member of staff has helped their families through difficult periods in their lives.

You and your team have ensured that your school is a carefully planned learning environment. Displays around the school celebrate pupils' work well and show the diverse and rich curriculum that pupils can take part in. The external environment is large and well designed so that pupils can take advantage of opportunities to learn outside, for example when pupils enjoyed drawing fractions on the playground to reinforce what they had been learning.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and courteous. For those pupils who at times struggle to maintain the high standards of behaviour that you expect, you have developed appropriate strategies. At times, you have had to use formal exclusions and external agencies to support pupils in improving their behaviour. The majority of these pupils have made exceptional improvement due to your team's dedication to help them. Pupils' personal development is strong. You and your staff encourage them to be responsible for their own behaviours and to learn about and consider the needs and opinions of others. Due to this strong ethos in school, many pupils relish the opportunity to work and help others in school. Year 6 pupils run an imagination club and are planning a rugby activity club for younger pupils. These clubs and the roles of playground monitors have all been developed from ideas that pupils have had. You have encouraged pupils to use their own initiative to manage these clubs and roles themselves.

At the last inspection, you were asked to improve the quality and standards pupils reach in writing. You and your team have focused well on this area for improvement. Pupils' literacy books show good standards are reached and a range of different skills are learned. Pupils use these skills to improve the quality of their writing. A large library area with a range of texts encourages pupils to read every day and take books home to read.

At the last inspection, you were also asked to improve the effectiveness of subject leaders in improving the quality of teaching and learning. You have not been as successful at tackling this area for improvement. Subject leaders have made some improvements. However, the quality of the teaching of literacy across all subjects, and of mathematics, is not as strong as you would like it to be. Subject leaders do not have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of their subject across the school and are not yet fully accountable for the outcomes in the subjects that they lead on.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils are happy when they are in your school and all those I spoke to said they feel safe. Governors take a very active role in ensuring that pupils are happy and safe by regularly holding discussions with groups of pupils to gather their opinions and observing their behaviours during the school day. Governors have also taken time to speak to pupils to reassure themselves that pupils know how to stay safe when using the internet, which they do. The vast majority of parents who responded to

the Ofsted online questionnaire consider their children are safe, happy and well cared for. Along with governors, you have ensured that a recent safeguarding audit has confirmed that all government training and recruitment requirements are met and that records are held securely. Not all the recommendations following the audit have been acted on and not all risk assessments are as comprehensive as they could be. However, along with the new safeguarding governor, you are in the process of dealing with these minor issues. The regular training that staff receive ensures that they know the signs to look for and who to turn to if they have any concerns about a pupil. All staff I spoke to have made referrals to you, as the designated safeguarding lead, and said that you always valued their opinions.

You and your governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Checks are made on all staff who work in the building so that they are fit to work with pupils.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I considered whether the leadership and management of the school had addressed the issues about subject leaders which were raised at the last inspection. You and your team have written a succinct and accurate school improvement plan which deals with the areas within school that need improving. You and governors have high expectations and this is evident from your school improvement plan. Your subject leaders have been successful in introducing schemes and methods of teaching which are helping pupils to learn. For example, in mathematics, pupils are encouraged to learn through experimenting with physical resources and to work out problems themselves so that they can gain a deeper understanding of the concepts that they are learning. This method has been introduced well. However, teachers are making mistakes and giving pupils incorrect information or marking work incorrectly at times, and this is not helping pupils to learn. Your subject leaders, at the moment, are not picking up where errors are being made by teachers. Pupils left Year 6 in 2017 having made progress in mathematics that is average compared to pupils nationally. However, school information from work in books and data show that rates of progress are declining.
- During this inspection, I considered the impact of strategies such as 'talk for writing' and the investment in literature that have been introduced to improve standards and progress in reading and writing. These strategies have been influential in improving achievement across the school. Pupils' progress reached at the end of Year 6 is in line with other pupils of the same age nationally. However, the quality of teaching in school, as you are aware, is variable. Some teachers are too often content when pupils are behaving and sitting well in lessons, but they are not ensuring that pupils are taking part in the learning activity. Your subject leaders are also seeing these types of behaviours as acceptable. Teachers' expectations are sometimes not high enough across the various subjects of the curriculum. Standards of presentation and spellings of key vocabulary are sometimes not as good as they could be for the age and ability of a pupil.
- Children in the Reception class make a good start and learn well. The Reception

class teacher has organised this learning environment so that children are eager to access the resources, both inside and outside, and take part in the learning activities that are on offer. The transition arrangements, which are available on the school website, are very good between the pre-school and the Reception class. Adults in these classes work hard to ensure that children confidently move seamlessly to the next class so that they miss little learning time in settling in. Children leave the Reception class reaching standards that are typically better than those of other children of the same age nationally.

- Leaders have taken care to ensure that the exciting curriculum that pupils currently receive is enhanced by learning about other religions and cultures. Pupils talk about how interested they were when a local Imam came into school to tell them all about his religion and cultural routines. You and your team are planning further initiatives so that this aspect of pupils' education is firmly embedded in the current curriculum.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- subject leaders are made more responsible for pupils' outcomes in the subjects they lead and that they have a more accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses
- teachers give pupils accurate feedback in mathematics, to improve pupil outcomes
- teachers have higher expectations, particularly in the spelling of key vocabulary, presentation and in the standard of writing across all subjects
- teachers have more realistic views of what pupils can achieve in lessons.

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 York. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jo Sharpe
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the subject leader for mathematics and your deputy headteacher, who is also the subject leader for English. We all spent time together observing learning in lessons and studying work in pupils' books. I met with several of your governors and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.

I reviewed a range of documentation. I studied your evaluation documentation as well as school improvement plans. Together, we studied achievement data. I also considered documentation relating to safeguarding, including your recruitment information.

I gathered opinions of pupils, staff and parents. I met with pupils formally and spoke to them at breaktimes and in lessons. Fourteen staff responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. Forty parents responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the same number responded to the Ofsted free-text facility. I also spoke to parents. All these views were taken into account.