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Mrs Jennifer Shoulders
Headteacher
Staining Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
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Dear Mrs Shoulders

Short inspection of Staining Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your passion and enthusiasm for teaching permeates the school. Since your appointment, you have created a highly effective leadership team. Well supported by your deputy headteacher, you have developed a skilled team of staff, and have successfully secured improvements across the school. Governors and staff share your high aspirations. Together, you are raising expectations about what pupils can achieve. Pupils strive to follow the school's values. These are: to aim high, work hard and show respect and kindness for each other. Pupils explained to me how 'teamwork is the glue that holds it all together'.

Since the last inspection, you, together with the staff, have tackled the areas of weakness that inspectors identified. Middle leaders have the skills they need to monitor their areas of responsibility effectively. They accurately identify areas for improvement and ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge they need to implement necessary changes. Subject leaders check diligently on the impact of the actions that staff take. This has been particularly successful in the changes you have made to teaching writing. Pupils apply their written skills and knowledge effectively across a range of curriculum subjects. Teachers use resources effectively to help pupils to improve their independent writing. Pupils take pride in their work. As a result, outcomes in writing for pupils are improving, particularly for the most able pupils. However, further challenge is needed for middle-attaining pupils to ensure that they reach the standard expected nationally by the end of key stage 2.

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. You have established a culture of professional dialogue. Staff receive training to update their skills and knowledge. Staff work with other colleagues to share their ideas and expertise, including with colleagues in other schools.

Leaders work with other colleagues to check that teachers' judgements of pupils' progress are accurate. Learning activities are well matched to the needs and interests of pupils because assessment is accurate. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils. Teachers use a range of assessment activities to identify gaps in pupils' learning accurately. Pupils who are struggling are helped to catch up quickly because skilled support staff provide pupils with the help they need. Although progress made by disadvantaged pupils is improving, it is too soon to measure the impact on outcomes.

The majority of parents spoken to during the inspection, and those who accessed Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, were very positive about the school. Parents value the changes they have seen. They appreciate the care and guidance that staff provide for their children as well as the information they receive about their children's progress. Parents are confident that their children are happy and safe in a caring and nurturing environment where staff have fostered a love of learning.

Pupils are extremely polite, confident and well-mannered. Members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously. They organise events to help others less fortunate than themselves. For example, pupils organised a fundraising event for the local food bank. They enjoy the 'mile a day' challenge, which helps them to keep fit and healthy. They value the opportunities they have to participate in a wide range of clubs, including cricket and gardening. Pupils enthusiastically described a recent visit to a local mosque: 'It was amazing, and we learned so much.' Leaders' effective work to prepare pupils for the next stage in their education ensures that older pupils feel confident and excited about their transition to secondary school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Safeguarding arrangements are understood by staff. Staff and governors receive regular training and are kept up to date on relevant safeguarding issues. Staff are vigilant. They identify vulnerable pupils quickly and ensure that they receive appropriate guidance. Leaders work with other agencies very effectively.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school. They learn about how to keep themselves safe, particularly when riding their bikes on the road. They also understand how to stay safe online. They understand the different forms that bullying can take. They speak confidently about how teachers deal quickly and effectively with any rare incidents of bullying. Pupils also explained to me that there is an adult in school they can talk to, should they have concerns or worries.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection we looked at several key lines of enquiry. I was interested to know about pupils' attendance. For the majority of pupils, attendance has remained above the national average for the past two years. However, there are a small number of pupils who are persistently absent from school. You know families well and staff swiftly follow up when pupils are absent. You ensure that pupils and families receive the guidance and care they need. You have introduced incentives, including rewards and certificates, which have had a positive impact on attendance. Rates of attendance for pupils who are persistently absent from school are improving.
- We discussed the actions you have taken to tackle the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have identified barriers to learning accurately. You and your dedicated staff establish positive relationships with potentially vulnerable families. Highly skilled staff work with a number of agencies and other professionals to support the pupils and their families effectively.
- Leaders provide training for staff so that they are able to support pupils' social and emotional development effectively. Staff foster positive relationships within a nurturing environment. As a result, pupils develop positive attitudes to learning. Teachers identify the gaps in pupils' learning and they ensure that pupils have the help they need to catch up quickly. The rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils, particularly at key stage 2, are improving. However, it is too soon to measure the impact on end-of-key-stage outcomes.
- Next, we looked at the way you teach phonics. Staff have received the training that they need to teach phonics accurately. Teachers' strong subject knowledge contributes to the progress that pupils make. Leaders ensure that phonics is taught consistently. Staff appreciate the opportunity to share ideas and expertise. Staff identify quickly those pupils who are struggling and pupils are given the help that they need to catch up. You invite parents to join in with weekly phonics sessions. Consequently, parents know how to help their children at home. Carefully chosen reading resources are accurately matched to pupils' phonetic skills. Pupils use their phonic skills confidently when they are reading and apply this knowledge in their independent writing.
- We also discussed the actions you have taken in order to improve outcomes for children in Reception. The appointment of a new leader in the early years has brought about a renewed enthusiasm within the early years. Leaders have established good working relationships with local nurseries. As a result of well-thought-through activities in the summer term, children settle quickly.
- Leaders ensure that staff understand how young children learn. Most children start school with the skills and knowledge typical for their age. Teachers use assessment information to identify the next steps in children's learning. As a result, carefully crafted learning opportunities ignite children's imaginations. Teachers provide children with opportunities to apply, practise and refine their skills. For example, during the inspection, children were fascinated by the growth and development of tadpoles in a tank. Skilled staff used questions effectively to encourage children to talk about the words they wanted to write and to refine

and develop their ideas. Children used their phonic skills confidently, and with increasing accuracy, to write what they could see.

- Children thrive in the exciting learning environment you have created. Staff use the outdoor area effectively to enhance the learning experiences for children. Staff identify children who are struggling and provide additional opportunities for them to catch up with their peers. Children work together cooperatively, taking turns and helping each other. The positive relationships fostered in Reception contribute to the good progress that children make. The majority of pupils in Reception are on track to achieve a good level of development by the end of the academic year.
- Finally, we looked at the actions you have taken to increase the proportion of pupils who reach the standards expected at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Since your appointment, you have been relentless in your drive to ensure that staff receive training to update their practice. Staff have benefited from high-quality training, and work collaboratively to share ideas and expertise. This has been particularly helpful for those staff new to teaching. As a consequence, teachers deliver English and mathematics consistently well across the school. Staff make sure that pupils have the opportunity to apply their skills and knowledge across other curriculum subjects, particularly in their written skills. Changes in the way that you teach mathematics ensures that pupils have a secure understanding in number and calculations. Pupils have the opportunity to apply their skills and knowledge with increasing accuracy, to solve challenging problems and explain the rationale for their answers. As a result of these developments, outcomes for pupils are improving across the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they build on the improvements made in identifying gaps in pupils' learning, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, so that they catch up quickly, particularly at key stage 2
- teachers provide greater challenge for pupils who have prior middle-attainment at key stage 2.

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

Amanda Stringer
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, other members of the leadership team and staff. I also met with five members of the governing body and with two representatives of the local authority. I conducted a learning walk with you and we visited classrooms, where I had the opportunity to speak with pupils and look at their work. I met with a group of pupils formally during the day and I spoke with a number of parents at the start of the school day. I took into account 12 responses to the staff questionnaire. I also considered 16 free-text comments and the 44 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. I scrutinised pupils' assessment information, the school's self-evaluation document and your school improvement plan. I checked on the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding procedures and practices.