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Mrs Suzanne Edmondson  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Edmondson

### **Short inspection of St Patrick's CofE School**

Following my visit to the school on 17 July 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 June 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your governors are highly committed to leading an inclusive school where all are welcomed, in line with the school's strong Christian values. You lead a happy and friendly school which one pupil described as 'like one big family'. Staff teach pupils to care for each other and to make a positive contribution to school life.

Relationships at all levels within the school are respectful. Pupils are polite and very well behaved. They move calmly around the school and play happily together in the playground. In class, pupils work cooperatively and strive to do their best. Pupils attend school very regularly because they enjoy coming to school. The pupils that I spoke to told me that lessons are fun, and they enjoy the trips and visits that you provide. Pupils relish attending outdoor and adventurous trips in Years 4, 5 and 6. They described how activities such as rafting, climbing and ghyll scrambling develop their confidence and resilience.

Parents and carers have a very positive view of the school. Parents responding to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, valued the engaging and diverse curriculum that leaders have planned. A typical comment was: 'Staff encourage children to develop confidence to become independent and to learn to make the right decisions for themselves.' Parents were keen to praise the good communication between school and home and described how teachers are always ready to listen to any concerns.

Governors keep their professional skills up to date through frequent training. They visit the school very regularly and keep a careful check on how pupils achieve, including disadvantaged pupils. Governors use their knowledge of the school to ask challenging questions to ensure that improvements are sustained.

You and your governors demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. You have used your detailed knowledge of the school to develop school improvement plans and set targets for improvement. However, this detailed information, including data on outcomes, is not used sharply enough in leaders' plans for improvement so it is not easy to check on the impact of changes.

At the previous inspection leaders were asked to set appropriate and challenging targets to improve teaching. You now use the accurate and detailed checks that you make on pupils' progress to check on the effectiveness of teaching. Training and support is given when needed and teaching is good.

Since the previous inspection, teachers have improved standards in handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Teachers develop pupils' writing skills and show pupils how to edit and improve their work. As a result, pupils' handwriting is neat and fluent, and their work is well presented. Pupils use their well-developed spelling and punctuation skills consistently in their writing. In the early years, children learn to write with confidence. However, opportunities to practise their early skills without the help of an adult are occasionally missed.

Mathematics was a subject to improve from the previous inspection and a key focus for this inspection. You and your leaders have taken steps to improve the challenge that teachers give pupils. Teachers plan plenty of opportunities for pupils to use and develop their problem-solving skills. They ask pupils to explain their reasoning and challenge them with skilful questioning. Some of the improvements that you have made to pupils' learning in mathematics are recent. The proportions of pupils reaching the expected standards in mathematics have risen across the school. However, leaders recognise that these improvements need to be embedded so that more pupils reach the higher standards in mathematics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. You have made sure that safeguarding is a high profile throughout the school. You and your governors ensure that all necessary checks are made on the suitability of staff to work with children and you check on visitors to the school. You provide staff with regular training so that they are vigilant and understand the current guidance.

You diligently follow up all concerns and make sure that pupils are safe, including pupils at risk of being missing from education. You work well with other professionals and agencies to secure support for pupils when necessary. Staff teach

pupils how to keep themselves safe both online and in the wider community, including cycling and road safety. Pupils are confident about how to seek help and support if they have any concerns. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that incidents of bullying are rare and quickly dealt with by staff.

## **Inspection findings**

- The inspection focused on several key lines of enquiry, the first of which was how well children achieve in the Reception Year. I found that standards are rising and children make good progress. This is because teachers plan a range of activities to develop children's skills in different areas. Children's workbooks show that they quickly acquire early writing skills, using their phonics knowledge to sound out and spell words. In mathematics, children are given plenty of challenge to develop their understanding of number, including addition and doubling. During my visit, I saw that children play cooperatively and with concentration. Children enjoy mixing colours and paint with precision and care. They are proud of their work. Teachers plan engaging and interesting activities, including in the attractive and exciting outdoor area. We agreed that there are some missed opportunities for children to practise their emerging writing skills without the help of an adult.
- My second key line of enquiry related to whether pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum. I found that you have planned an engaging curriculum which pupils enjoy. Pupils develop their skills across a range of subjects, including science, history and art. You plan a range of visits and visitors to enthuse pupils at the start of each new learning topic. For example, during a recent 'kings and kingdoms' topic, pupils enjoyed visiting Tullie House Museum to learn about Tudors and Victorians. Through the curriculum, you teach pupils to value and respect diversity, including gender and race. Pupils learn about other religions such as Buddhism. They told me how they had and enjoyed a visit to a Buddhist temple, which brought their learning to life. Through the local schools' Pupil Parliament, pupils learn about British values including democracy. You give pupils a wide range of experiences and opportunities, developing their skills across the curriculum.
- The third key line of enquiry was to check how leaders use additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. You and your staff know these pupils and their parents very well. This means you have a clear understanding of any barriers to learning that this group of pupils have. You use additional funding carefully to enable disadvantaged pupils to receive valuable additional support for their learning, such as extra tuition. You make sure that staff give disadvantaged pupils opportunities to develop their confidence, for instance through attending trips or learning to play a musical instrument. You have taken effective actions to improve the attendance of these pupils, which is now in line with other pupils in school and nationally. Your checks on learning show that this group of pupils are making good progress from their varied starting points.
- During the inspection, I found that pupils value the opportunities that you give them to support and care for others, including the Year 6 buddying system for Reception children. Pupils value the time they are given to care for the school chickens, Duchess and Tallulah, feeding them daily and collecting their eggs.

Pupils help to organise assemblies and help out at lunchtimes. Older pupils take pride in their leadership roles such as delivering an online safety assembly to the school. In the garden area, pupils have helped to plan a reflective prayer area for the school. Through such opportunities, you develop pupils' confidence and social skills, preparing them well for their next stage of education.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders use data sharply in their plans for improvement so that they can check with accuracy whether improvements are working
- they embed improvements to mathematics teaching and increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards
- staff plan opportunities for children in Reception to practise writing unaided.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Carlisle, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cumbria. 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 and your mathematics subject leader. I also spoke to four governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke to a representative of the local authority. I met with eight pupils from key stage 2 and spoke informally with other pupils during lessons. I visited classes with you where I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils. I also heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read.

I took account of 23 free-text responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire. I also met with parents before school. I looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, records of monitoring of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings and pupils' behaviour logs. I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep pupils safe, staff training records, safeguarding checks and attendance information. I undertook a review of the school's website.