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Mrs Jan Marshall  
Headteacher  
The Marston Thorold's Charity Church of England School  
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Dear Mrs Marshall

### **Short inspection of The Marston Thorold's Charity Church of England School**

Following my visit to the school on 30 October 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 April 2015.

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.**

Parents and carers appreciate the friendly ethos of this small school, where the staff know the pupils extremely well. When pupils join the school, they settle quickly. Parents told me that they value the teachers' efforts to make their children welcome. Communication with parents is particularly strong. Parents, pupils and staff alike are proud of the school's standing at the heart of the local community.

Pupils told me that they enjoy school. They welcome visitors and respect all members of staff. They said that they particularly enjoy the extra-curricular opportunities available to them. One parent, reflecting the views of many, said, 'My child has been given opportunities never previously offered to them'. Pupils are proud of their school and attend regularly.

Pupils' attendance is higher than that seen nationally. Pupils take pride in their school and are keen to learn. For the most part, they are polite and behave well. However, their behaviour between lessons, and at breaktime and lunchtime, is sometimes a little boisterous. On occasion, pupils are silly and inattentive in class.

At the previous inspection, leaders were asked to ensure that teaching in Years 1

and 2 challenged pupils of all abilities to think hard so that they make rapid progress. Teaching, learning and assessment in early years and key stage 1 are still not as effective as they could be. Although pupils' attainment is strong, some pupils do not make the progress they could in reading, writing or mathematics.

Leaders were also asked to improve the teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation throughout the school. At key stage 2, improvements in pupils' writing skills are evident. Pupils' attainment in spelling, grammar and punctuation was above that seen nationally in 2017. Pupils also achieved well in the end-of-key-stage writing tests. The proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard and greater depth were above the national averages in 2017. Provisional information for 2018 suggests that pupils have continued to attain above the national averages.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Pupils told me that they feel safe in school. They said that they could turn to any member of staff if they had a problem. Pupils are full of praise for the care, support and guidance they receive from their teachers and teaching assistants. All members of staff know who the designated safeguarding lead is and the actions they would take if they became concerned about the safety of a pupil.

Pupils said that they learn how to keep safe in school and in the community. They were able to describe how to keep safe when using technology such as mobile phones, for example. Around school and in classrooms there are many informative displays that provide pupils with help and advice about a range of matters, including how to keep safe.

Pupils were keen to say that bullying is not an issue within their school. They understand the meaning of bullying and the difference between this and 'falling out' with friends.

However, there are some weaknesses in the administration of some safeguarding procedures.

### **Inspection findings**

- Pupils attain well in key stage 2. The proportions who achieve the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics are typically above national averages. Provisional information for 2018 suggests that this high attainment at the end of key stage 2 has been maintained.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was below that seen nationally. All pupils achieved this measure by the end of Year 2.
- At key stage 1 and in early years, pupils' and children's progress on the whole is less secure than that seen in key stage 2. In these key stages, teachers do not always ensure that tasks are well matched to pupils' needs, or build on what pupils already know and can do.

- Middle leaders are not doing enough to improve teaching and learning in subjects or early years. They have not all received the necessary training to carry out their roles.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are known well by all staff. Each pupil has an individualised plan to support their learning needs and they receive good care. However, leaders do not track the achievement of these pupils carefully enough to intervene quickly when they fall behind. As a result, pupils with SEND do not make the progress of which they are capable.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they provide middle leaders with the training to carry out their roles effectively, so they can bring about the necessary improvements in their areas
- they rectify the weaknesses in the administration of safeguarding procedures
- teaching in early years and key stage 1 builds effectively on what pupils know and can do, so that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable
- they better monitor the progress of pupils with SEND, and intervene when these pupils fall behind and ensure that they catch up quickly
- all pupils behave sensibly in lessons when they change learning tasks and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.

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

Jayne Ashman  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

You were absent due to illness at the time of the inspection. An interim headteacher had been in place for almost five weeks. A local authority review of provision within the school took place during the second week of October 2018.

Meetings were held with the interim headteacher, the class 3 teacher, who has some leadership responsibilities, the chair of the governing body and the vice-chair of the governors' finance committee. I met with all teaching staff and two teaching assistants. I spoke by telephone to a representative of the local authority. I met with a group of pupils and considered the views of 44 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I observed pupils at lunchtime and

spoke informally with them. I evaluated a range of documents, including interim leaders' self-evaluation, the local authority school improvement visit report and documents relating to the provision for pupils with SEND. I reviewed information relating to pupils' attainment and progress. An extensive scrutiny of the arrangements to safeguard pupils' safety and welfare was undertaken with leaders.