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Miss Linda Collier
Headteacher
Elvington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
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Dear Miss Collier

Short inspection of Elvington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 November 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 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment as headteacher in September 2015, there have been considerable changes in leadership, staffing and membership of the governing body. As headteacher, you provide strong and decisive leadership. You lead by example and your calm and resolute approach ensures that pupils are provided with the very best opportunities. You and your staff have created a caring and nurturing ethos that places pupils at the heart of the school. As a result, pupils are happy and safe and achieve well.

The school is proud of its Christian ethos. Pupils understand the school's core values of 'respect, hope, perseverance, friendship, thankfulness and trust'. Pupils say that they feel happy in school and enjoy their learning. They attend regularly. Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and want to make progress. Most parents are supportive of the school and speak highly of the work of you and your team. As one parent commented, 'This is a lovely, nurturing school. The emphasis on values shines through in the children. It's lovely to see smiling children at the beginning and end of each day.'

You have an accurate view of the school and you are proactive in securing further developments. This ensures that the quality of teaching across the school is going from strength to strength. You have acted decisively to make sure that any weaker teaching is quickly addressed. All members of staff who met with me told me that they are proud to work in the school and that the school has improved since the last

inspection.

You have tackled the areas identified at the last inspection well. Teachers are effective in providing challenging work for most-able pupils so that their progress is strong. Pupils write well in other curriculum subjects. For example, pupils in key stage 2 have recently produced high-quality writing based on their work on the Second World War. The writing I looked at in pupils' topic books is of a good standard. You have rightly identified that the most able pupils in key stage 2 could be further challenged in mathematics and you are taking steps to address this.

At the time of the last inspection, your predecessor was also asked to improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that subject leaders check closely on the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility. Subject leaders for English and mathematics are knowledgeable about standards and teaching across the school, including in the Reception Year. As part of their work to keep standards high, they visit classrooms and make regular checks on the quality of work in pupils' books. Improvement points are highlighted in the school improvement plan and all staff work together to make sure that pupils make the best-possible progress.

There have been changes to the governing body since the last inspection, including the appointment of a new chair of the governing body. Governors bring a wide range of highly relevant skills, knowledge and expertise to their roles. They have a clear understanding of the school's performance and receive useful and timely information to allow them to carry out their roles. Governors provide good support to you and regularly hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make across the school. For example, they rightly told me that learning activities in the Reception Year could offer the most able children further challenge so that more exceed the early learning goals in writing and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have ensured that staff and governors receive appropriate training in child protection and you and your team ensure that you carry out appropriate checks on the suitability of all staff who work with pupils. Staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and are in no doubt about what action the school expects them to take should they have any concerns.

Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. Pupils say that there is no bullying but, if it did happen, they are confident that teachers and leaders would tackle it quickly. Pupils know who to go to if they have any concerns and are confident that staff will deal effectively with any problems. Pupils understand how to keep safe on the internet and confidently talk about road safety and 'stranger danger'. Almost every parent who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that the school keeps pupils safe.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed on the key lines of enquiry. The first line of enquiry looked at how effectively leaders are improving pupils' progress in writing by the end of key stage 2. You have recognised that, although attainment has remained above average, with an increasing proportion of pupils attaining greater depth, pupils made less progress in writing at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 from their individual starting points than in reading and mathematics.
- Work in pupils' books shows that pupils are applying a range of writing features to different genres. Teachers give pupils regular opportunities to write at length to develop their stamina. Pupils regularly reflect on their own writing and their ability to edit their own writing is a well-developed skill. Displays in classrooms provide helpful reminders of grammar and spelling work, which supports pupils in their daily writing. Pupils' presentation of their written work is good, as well as accurate. The approach to teaching handwriting is clear and consistent.
- You have used links with other schools to enable teachers to compare and check the accuracy of their assessments. Teachers have also done this in school, and external checks made by the local authority have confirmed that teachers are assessing pupils' written work accurately. The school's own assessment information and inspection evidence confirm that pupils are making good progress in writing.
- My second line of enquiry, and a key area for improvement in the school's development plan, was to explore how effectively leaders are addressing the progress that most-able pupils make in mathematics by the end of key stage 2. This is because, in 2018, the most able pupils made weaker progress than other pupils from their individual starting points.
- You have rightly identified mathematics as an improvement priority. You have reflected on the school's approach to how mathematics is taught and have taken action to improve it. Pupils in key stage 2 are progressing well in mathematics as a result of thorough planning, teachers' good subject knowledge and effective teaching. Pupils are often given time to talk to each other about their learning in mathematics. In one lesson we visited, pupils enthusiastically discussed how to calculate internal angles of different types of triangles. In another lesson we visited, pupils enjoyed working together to make their own clock face, have it show different times and then convert these times to the 24-hour clock.
- My classroom visits, together with scrutiny of pupils' work, showed that pupils have a deep understanding of calculation and the number system. Leaders recognise that the most able pupils could be moved on sooner to more challenging reasoning and problem-solving activities to accelerate further their rate of progress.
- I also considered how well leaders ensure that children make a good start to school in the Reception Year. Most children join school with skills that are typical for their age, with some children joining with skills above those typical for their age. The proportion of children achieving a 'good level of development' has been above average for the last three years. However, the proportion of children exceeding the early learning goals in writing and mathematics has been below

the national average for the last three years.

- There are attractive spaces for children to learn through play both indoors and outdoors. Staff provide a range of activities that inspire children to engage in learning through play, as well as in a more structured approach. Children have opportunities to practise their early reading, writing and mathematical skills in a range of engaging learning activities. However, you have rightly identified that the environment and activities planned could offer further challenge to increase the proportion of children exceeding the early learning goals in writing and mathematics.
- Finally, I was interested to learn whether pupils benefit from a curriculum that is broad and balanced. Pupils' learning in subjects other than English and mathematics is enriched with a range of visits and visitors. For example, key stage 2 pupils enthusiastically told me about a recent visit to Eden Camp as part of their work on Second World War and key stage 1 pupils enjoyed visiting Beningbrough Hall to dress up as part of their Victorians work.
- You have worked to ensure that pupils can develop and apply their skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. Work in pupils' books shows pupils have many opportunities to develop their subject-specific skills in other subjects, including science. For example, key stage 2 pupils make accurate predictions and draw conclusions following a series of test results. Pupils confirmed this when they enthusiastically told me about their 'exciting science investigations.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils have opportunities sooner to develop reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics, so that they make consistently strong progress
- learning opportunities in the Reception Year offer greater levels of challenge to enable more children to exceed the early learning goals in writing and mathematics.

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

Mark Randall
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, your English and mathematics leaders and six members of staff. I also spoke to two governors. I talked to a representative of the local authority. I spoke informally with pupils during lessons and at lunchtime. I visited classes with you, where I observed teaching and learning and looked at pupils' work.

I took account of 38 free-text responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire and 11 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey. I also met with two parents before school. I also evaluated a range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, safeguarding records and information about current pupils' achievement and attendance. I undertook a review of the school's website.