

15 February 2019

Mrs Marie Thompson
Executive Headteacher
Caunton Dean Hole CofE Primary School
Manor Road
Caunton
Newark
Nottinghamshire
NG23 6AD

Dear Mrs Thompson

Short inspection of Caunton Dean Hole CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 February 2019, 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 November 2015.

This school continues to be good.

You have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Following your appointment in September 2017, you quickly identified the school's strengths and areas in need of further development. You have taken effective action to bring about the necessary improvements. You sought staff views and incorporated these in the school's plans. You have a clear vision for the school and have shared high expectations of all. Staff understand the school's priorities and recognise their role in realising your aims and ambition for the school and its pupils.

The school makes effective use of its formal collaboration with Holy Trinity CofE Infant School and links with other local schools. For example, staff liaise to share best practice and to develop assessment processes. Teachers also work with staff from these schools to moderate pupils' work. This has ensured the accuracy of teachers' assessments.

Caunton Dean Hole CofE Primary school is considerably smaller than the average-sized primary school. You have used this situation to your advantage. Staff know pupils well as individuals and use this to support them in all aspects of their school life. Relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils, are extremely positive. There is a sense of community and collaboration. Pupils, parents, carers and staff describe the school as 'one big happy family'. This is evident in the way in which pupils and staff treat and care for each other.

The atmosphere in the school is warm and welcoming. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures and understand diversity. They respect and value others' differences.

Governors are committed to the school and maintain a high presence. They are knowledgeable and understand the school's priorities. There is a range of experience and expertise among the governing body. This is used effectively by the careful allocation of link governors to key aspects of the school's work. Governors regularly visit to monitor leaders' actions and, by doing so, maintain an up-to-date knowledge of the school's performance. Governors ensure that their statutory duties are met, for example, by auditing the school's safeguarding arrangements. Governors have the skills, knowledge and understanding to hold leaders to account, challenging and offering support as appropriate.

Parents, who made their views known, are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They recognise the support their children receive in school and the opportunities that are made available to them. Parents also appreciate the help they receive to support their child's learning at home. For example, parents were recently invited to a workshop where teachers showed them how mathematics is taught in school and how they can help their child practise their skills at home. Several parents said that this had been extremely helpful.

You have taken action to address the areas identified as needing improvement at the last inspection. You have introduced a new, simplified system for assessing pupils' work and for tracking their progress. This enables staff to identify more easily gaps in pupils' learning and to ensure that these learning needs are met. You have introduced a new approach to the teaching of mathematics. Pupils now have more opportunities to develop their reasoning skills. You have identified the need to develop this further by ensuring that pupils consistently apply their mathematical understanding by developing their problem-solving skills.

Since the last inspection, subject leaders have observed each other's teaching. Leaders use this to share best practice and improve the quality of teaching across the school. This work is complemented by the liaison activities facilitated through the school's formal collaboration and participation in local networks.

Leaders and governors have ensured that the school's website now meets requirements.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are effective and fit for purpose. Staff and governors receive regular training and recognise their responsibilities and duties in safeguarding matters. Both you and the head of school are trained as safeguarding leaders, which means that there is always a designated person on site. Processes for raising concerns are straightforward and understood by all. You monitor and follow up potential concerns and involve external agencies when necessary.

Pupils are taught about safeguarding matters and understand how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. For example, they learn about online safety and know how to protect themselves from the potential dangers of the internet. Pupils know who they can speak to if they have concerns.

Inspection findings

- Children in the early years setting make a good start to their school life. You have reviewed the approach to teaching in the Nursery and Reception area and children now benefit from a balance of adult- and child-led activities. Children are happy and settled. They are confident to practise the skills they have learned in adult-led activities when they are working independently. This is having a positive impact on their progress. They are well prepared to start key stage 1.
- You have recently refurbished the early years outdoors area. This has included ensuring that there is provision for children to practise their mathematical skills. Plans are in place to ensure that reading and writing development is promoted in the outdoor area.
- Teachers manage the mixed-age class arrangements very well. The recent change in approach to the deployment of teaching assistants has helped to ensure that pupils work on activities appropriate to their needs. Teaching assistants are effective in helping pupils to make progress. The quality of teaching is good and is particularly strong in key stage 2, where staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. For example, the inspector noted excellent questioning by teachers, drawing out complex technical terminology, which extended pupils' learning in an English lesson.
- The new approach to teaching mathematics has increased the level of challenge provided to pupils. Teachers use assessment information to set pupils work that is matched to their ability, particularly at key stage 2. However, pupils are not always moved on to more demanding work quickly enough once they have demonstrated sufficient levels of understanding. Ensuring that pupils achieve the higher standards, particularly in mathematics, remains a priority.
- You have ensured that pupils experience a variety of opportunities that extend beyond the context of this small primary school. Pupils participate in a range of activities with pupils from other schools. For example, they take part in collective worship with pupils from Holy Trinity CofE Infant School. They also participate in sporting events, such as the local hockey league. Pupils benefit from opportunities to develop their leadership skills. For example, some pupils are part of the 'eco-group', which carries out activities in the community, such as litter-picking. Other pupils are elected to act as school councillors. Pupils value these activities and appreciate the opportunities they provide. Pupils are confident, articulate and self-aware. They are well prepared for the transition to secondary school.
- Not all pupils attend school as regularly as they should. Currently, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is considerably above the national average. Leaders and governors have not ensured that all parents recognise their responsibility to ensure that pupils attend school as regularly as

they should.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they work with parents to ensure that all pupils attend school as regularly as possible
- improvements to the early years provision are further developed by providing opportunities for children to practise their reading and writing skills in the outdoor area
- teachers move pupils on to more demanding activities more quickly, particularly in mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Southwell, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Nottinghamshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Mosley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, teaching staff and teaching assistants. The inspector also met with members of the governing body and spoke by telephone with the deputy director of education for the diocese and with a local authority representative. The inspector visited all classes with the executive headteacher and discussed the strengths and weaknesses observed. They also visited the early years outdoor area.

The inspector met with a group of pupils and considered the 13 responses to Ofsted's pupils' survey. She spoke with pupils in their lessons and looked at their work to evaluate the quality of their learning. Ten responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and nine free-text comments, were considered. The inspector spoke with several parents at the start of the day and read a letter and an email from parents. The inspector met with a group of staff and considered the eight responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

A range of school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, and information about pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour, attendance and safety. Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and the inspector looked at the information published on the school's website.