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Mr Nicholas Payling
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Dear Mr Payling

Short inspection of Cawood Church of England Voluntary Aided 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 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 in 2017, you have made several changes and these have impacted in a positive way. You demonstrate a passion and determination to provide the best for every child. The staff share your vision and hold you in high regard. Governors and parents value your leadership skills and 'hands-on' approach. Parents who I spoke to, and those who made comments on Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, acknowledged the fact that you are always on the yard before and after school to welcome and bid farewell to the pupils. A number of parents praised the good work of the school and, in particular, the professionalism of the teaching staff and teaching assistants. One said, 'No matter how small the problem, staff are always approachable and willing to listen', while another wrote about the 'fantastic, caring ethos'.

Pupils are proud of their school and those I spoke to were keen to describe the friendly, caring ethos. Pupils from Year 6 were eager to tell me about their involvement in the Archbishop of York Leadership Award, which focused on teamwork and building an inclusive culture. Younger pupils described the work of the school council, 'worship leaders' and the opportunities to be involved in extra-curricular sport and music activities. They all said that they would recommend the school to a friend.

Your self-evaluation summary is accurate and correctly identifies the school as good and improving. You have formed an accurate view of its strengths and areas that are most in need of improvement.

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. In 2018, the proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected standard and the higher standard in reading and writing in the key stage 2 national tests increased significantly from 2017. In these subjects, attainment was high, with a well-above average proportion reaching both the expected and higher standards. Teaching and learning are also strong in the early years and in key stage 1. This is reflected in the results in the phonics screening check and the end of key stage 1 national assessments.

You and your leadership team have addressed thoroughly the areas for improvement mentioned in the last inspection report. There has been a clear focus on the provision of high-quality teaching across the school. This has been achieved through the appointment of four new staff and the reorganisation of classes. Staff attend regular training sessions provided by the local authority and readily share good practice. You and the assistant headteacher have high expectations and there has been a relentless drive to develop key skills in mathematics and English. Pupils are given precise guidance regarding what they need to do to improve their work. Spelling, handwriting, grammar and presentation were highlighted as needing improvement at the inspection; these have been a focus and improvement in these areas have resulted in pupils making excellent progress in writing in key stage 2.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Safeguarding records are appropriate and all checks have been carried out for staff. Leaders are currently taking steps to improve their record-keeping systems even further, so that all key documents can be accessed more easily.

Pupils' attendance is monitored closely. The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly and arrive on time.

Behaviour in classrooms, corridors and at lunchtimes is very good. Pupils report that there are few incidents of poor behaviour and that aggressive behaviour and name-calling are not tolerated. They say that any incidents which occur are dealt with swiftly and that there is always someone to talk to if they have a concern. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and a good knowledge of potential dangers when using the internet. All were able to give good advice regarding staying safe online. Pupils show a good awareness of road safety and older pupils receive 'Bikeability' training.

The views of the pupils were reinforced by their parents. Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire 'strongly agreed' that their child 'felt safe' at school and many submitted written comments praising staff for their caring approach.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry concerned pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics and, in particular, what senior leaders are doing to challenge the most able pupils. This was because key stage 2 results in 2018 showed that pupils did not achieve as well in mathematics as they did in reading and writing. The proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the higher standard in mathematics was below the national average. Much work has been carried out and the new mathematics leader was able to describe the strategies that had been implemented. A new mathematics scheme has been introduced which focuses on the development of core skills. Staff training has been a priority and the mathematics leader, who is part of the Teacher Research Group, has delivered training on mental mathematics, reasoning and challenging the most able. Pupils with whom I spoke said that they enjoyed mathematics and especially the daily mental arithmetic challenge. There was clearly a high level of challenge in the Year 1/2 mathematics lesson that we visited, where pupils were learning about simple fractions. All of the pupils were able to develop reasoning skills through astute questioning by the teacher. Exercise books for most classes reflected the strong progress being made by pupils. However, further work is needed to ensure that the most able pupils are given even greater challenge so that the proportion reaching the higher standards increases.
- Another line of enquiry concerned the achievement of the small number of disadvantaged pupils across the school. Over the past three years, the attainment of these pupils has been lower than that of their peers, particularly in key stage 1. You are using the pupil premium funding effectively to provide additional focused support, such as from teaching assistants and to purchase resources to target key number and language skills. In some cases, emotional support is delivered by teaching assistants. Inspection evidence shows that, across the school, most disadvantaged pupils are achieving well and previous gaps in their attainment compared to others are closing.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2016, in writing, pupils did not make good progress from their previous Year 3 starting points. You, correctly, prioritised writing as an area for improvement and much has been done to enhance pupils' skills and speed up their progress. Two years on, pupils' achievement in writing has improved considerably. Attainment at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 was exceptionally high, with nearly all pupils achieving the expected standard and over half achieving the higher standard. Pupils made excellent progress from their previous starting points, placing the school in the highest 10% nationally. You described the strategies that have been used to bring about this improvement. You have introduced a new programme for the teaching of literacy skills in key stage 1. In key stage 2, effective links have been forged with other subject areas, particularly history, and pupils are encouraged to write across a range of genres. In the Year 4/5 lesson that we visited, pupils were writing a guide about how to survive an air raid. Pupils knew exactly what they needed to do to write an effective set of instructions. Most were able to talk confidently to me about prepositions, sentence starters and the range of punctuation they were using. In a Year 3 class, pupils were using empathy to write letters home as evacuees, while in a Year 6 lesson pupils were demonstrating skilled use of

inference and retrieval to answer questions relating to their class text. However, although attainment in writing is high, boys do not achieve as well as girls. Although this is something that you are already focusing on, further work is needed to close this gap.

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is above average. Children are very well prepared for learning in Year 1. Even so, during my visit, I wanted to look at whether the most able children are challenged in their learning. This is because, in recent years, the proportion of children exceeding the expected level, although increasing, has been average in reading, writing and number. Given children's starting points, it is not clear if the most able children make good progress. Your recently appointed Reception class teacher has already considered this. Most-able children are now set targets that are more challenging. Teacher-led sessions challenge them to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding effectively. Their progress is now good.
- Children's reading, writing and number skills are effectively developed, especially when they learn and play inside the classroom. In reading, good-quality reading texts encourage children to become confident, thoughtful speakers in a language-rich environment. Children are given good opportunities to develop their writing skills. Stories are used to encourage children to find reasons to write. In number, the most able children can describe confidently how to count on and back from numbers between 10 and 20. Leaders know that more needs to be done to extend opportunities to develop children's reading, writing and number skills when they learn outside. This is an important next step.
- Pupils read well. A culture for reading has been established and pupils can talk knowledgeably about their favourite books and authors. Those that I listened to read fluently and with expression. Younger pupils were able to use their phonics skills to decode most words. Attainment in reading is high in both key stages 1 and 2. In 2018, almost half of Year 6 pupils reached the higher standard in reading. You have ambitious, but sensible, plans to further develop the school library, so that the number and range of challenging texts available to pupils is improved.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is a greater level of challenge for the most able pupils, so that the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard in mathematics increases
- the early years outdoor area provides children with more opportunities to develop reading, writing and number skills
- pupils are provided with a wider range of appropriately challenging texts in the books in the school library
- there is a continued focus on the development of boys' writing.

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 North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Richard Knowles
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the leader for English, the mathematics leader, the local authority school improvement partner and three members of the governing body. I evaluated documentation, including the school's self-evaluation summary, the school's improvement plan, assessment data, and the recent visit notes from the local authority school improvement partner. I spoke with a number of parents at the beginning of the day and considered the 24 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I met formally with three groups of pupils from a range of year groups. The first group discussed safeguarding and behaviour with me. The second group talked about reading and I listened to them all read. The third group described the wider curriculum and extra-curricular activities. I also spoke with pupils informally in lessons and around school. You and I observed a range of learning across all classes, including work in mathematics in Reception and key stage 1 and in writing in key stage 2. We also visited the early years to gauge the quality of provision outdoors. During the afternoon, I carried out a scrutiny of the written work from several year groups and looked at the learning journals for early years children. There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires of pupil and staff views.