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Mr Martin Kyle
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Dear Mr Kyle

Short inspection of The St Faith and St Martin Church of England Junior School, Lincoln

Following my visit to the school on 12 March 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.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

The St Faith and St Martin Church of England Junior School is a friendly, respectful, caring and welcoming place to learn. Pupils feel valued and listened to. They are keen to succeed and achieve well in their education. One pupil told me that 'school is amazing'. Pupils are extremely proud that they are given many opportunities to take on roles and responsibilities in each year group. Opportunities to participate in a range of sporting, creative and musical activities are greatly appreciated by pupils. They understand that their physical and mental health is important to you.

Your church values underpin the work of the school. The six values of perseverance, patience, responsibility, creativity, honesty and hope are central to the work of the school. These are evident in classrooms and they support learning. These values are so embedded that pupils requested areas be included in your new playground to represent them so that they are always recognised.

Without exception, every parent and carer I spoke with during the inspection held you and your fellow senior leaders in high regard. They recognise the improvements

that you have brought about for their children. I am impressed by how eager parents were to tell me that 'This school cannot be recommended enough; it is excellent.' Your leadership has been described as 'inspirational' and many parents are impressed that you greet each child and parent daily. A final quote summarised the feelings of many, 'Everything is about the children and for the children.'

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about everyone being treated fairly. Every pupil is nurtured and encouraged to improve. Parents and pupils know that people are expected to achieve their full potential. Pupils explained that extra help is given to them if they find learning hard and teachers give clear explanations in lessons. Pupils are clear that the expectation is for them to try and solve problems independently by applying what they have learned to new situations. They like this challenge and work confidently independently.

Since the previous inspection, you have fully embraced the opportunity to improve the school further. You have worked with determination to address the recommendations and, in doing so, have continued to improve the quality of education for your pupils. You and your senior leaders have high expectations and aspirations for your school. This is reflected in the challenging targets you set for all groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), both academically and for attending regularly. You work as a team and your strapline of 'We are a team that achieves amazing things every day' is reflected in the staff survey. All staff report that they are proud to work at this school. I observed you wishing both pupils and staff 'an amazing day' and this embedded culture permeates all aspects of the work of the school.

Support for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND has been a clear priority for you. You have appointed and trained a new senior leader as the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and the deputy headteacher as the lead practitioner for disadvantaged pupils. Both leaders are ensuring that planning supports the needs of these pupils. Focused interventions are discussed with teaching staff, based upon regular assessments of the pupils' learning. Support is specific and direct. Leaders have drawn successfully upon external research to improve their delivery of interventions. Evidence is clear that both groups of pupils are making faster progress compared to other pupils across all year groups because of this work.

You are participating in a project that externally evaluates your provision for pupils with SEND, as well as peer reviews which are aiding pupils' learning. Evidence is clear that adults provide highly effective provision within an inclusive environment, successfully enabling pupils to feel supported and to flourish.

Governors are proud of the achievements and progress made. They recognise that there is a 'constant buzz' in the school and that leaders have driven improvements across the curriculum. Classrooms reflect the high expectations you have placed upon curriculum areas, including and beyond English and mathematics. Displays demonstrate that an exceptionally high quality of work is produced by the pupils in history, science, religious education, geography and art. Presentation of work both

on display and in pupils' books is of a high standard. Pupils state that they are proud of work in their books.

Safeguarding is effective.

As the designated safeguarding leader, you ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You work robustly to ensure that all systems are followed so that there is a strong culture of safeguarding permeating school life. Pupils feel safe and parents know that this is a priority for you because 'you genuinely care about the pupils.'

Staff are well trained in safeguarding requirements. They have a good understanding of safeguarding expectations. Your system for recording concerns is well used. It provides a clear chronology of events. You are tenacious in following up concerns with external agencies. You work closely with parents and a range of agencies to find solutions and support families effectively.

Governors monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding in school. They take their roles seriously and report regularly to the governing body. Safeguarding training for governors is up to date. Complete employment checks are carried out diligently prior to appointing new staff members.

Leaders ensure that pupils know that they will always be listened to by adults. Opportunities for pupils to anonymously report concerns or anxieties are valued. They know that they will be supported. Incidents of bullying are rare and pupils say they are always resolved to their satisfaction.

Pastoral support is highly valued by the parents and pupils. I observed a pupil being successful in school because of the highly focused pastoral support your team provides. Behaviour incidents have therefore reduced because of this effective support.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I explored how attendance is improving for all groups of pupils. You have rightly recognised the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND as a priority. You have sought creative solutions to ensure that pupils attend regularly. You have worked closely with parents and, for some individuals, attendance has increased by 35%. Attendance for these groups are currently above the national average.
- You are determined in your approach to ensure that all pupils attend school daily. You have made your stance clear to parents and leave-of-absence requests have decreased as a result. Systems for improving attendance are adhered to by pupils and parents. They recognise and respect the expectation that any absence needs to be reported.
- Good attendance is celebrated. Pupils understand why they need to attend school regularly. Pupils want to come to school and they enjoy learning. Attendance is

currently above the national average for the second year in a row and is continuing to increase.

- Leaders are determined to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Parents recognise this and commented on the rapid improvement following the time, support and correct interventions provided for pupils. During the inspection, I observed 'scaffolded' supports and well-prepared resources being provided for pupils to help them further in their learning. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support pupils and diligently check their understanding throughout lessons. The latest school performance information shows a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with SEND achieve well. Their achievement has improved over the last three years.
- The subject knowledge of teachers is strong, as is their understanding of the needs of individual pupils in their classes. Expectations of all pupils are high. Work is planned to ensure that there are appropriate opportunities to practise and revisit learning if needed.
- Strategies implemented to support the acquisition of vocabulary are proving highly successful. A range of dynamic experiences planned for pupils to touch, smell and view objects are used successfully to further deepen and contextualise their understanding. This was demonstrated with the word 'coarse', which pupils then used confidently in their writing. Classrooms contain well-designed 'visual vocabulary' boards which highlight key words to help deepen pupils' understanding. These are used and referred to successfully to support learning. A greater range of books have been purchased. They are used skilfully to highlight, extend and successfully broaden pupils' vocabulary.
- Writing is a strength of the school. The curriculum successfully inspires pupils to write vibrantly. Visits and visitors into school motivate pupils to further increase and deepen their knowledge. Pupils are skilfully taught the skills of being a strong writer, including improved grammatical structures and punctuation. These are carefully applied in their independent work. Opportunities to practise writing are frequent. Pupils enthusiastically report that they enjoy these. Pupils' attainment in writing at the end of Year 6 was high in 2018. Moderation of writing with other schools and within school is frequent to ensure the accuracy of your assessments.
- Your curriculum has been fully reviewed by the staff team to carefully meet the needs of your pupils. You are ensuring that it meets the needs of the locality, the breadth of the curriculum, core knowledge and 21st-century skills and inspires pupils, with church school values at its centre. While medium-term planning has improved across all subjects, you have rightly recognised that this needs to be sharpened to show sequential gains in knowledge.
- You have improved communication with parents about the themes of learning with newsletters on the school website. You use the community well to deepen the learning of the pupils, as was made clear in the use of an author to share his knowledge of the First and Second World Wars. Pupils reported that they

thoroughly enjoy their learning. A parent confirmed that 'the curriculum is inspiring and motivates my son to learn.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they enable middle leaders to continue to effectively develop a broad curriculum which sequences and develops the progression of learning
- they refine systems for assessment for foundation subjects so that they are robust and that gaps in knowledge can be taught, practised and become embedded rapidly.

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

Jacqueline Stirland
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the SENCo, subject leaders for English, the school business manager and two members of the governing body. I met with a number of parents at the start of the school day. I met with staff in the school's breakfast club. I had a discussion with a group of pupils. I spoke with staff to discuss their understanding of, and the processes for, safeguarding in the school.

I spoke to you about your self-evaluation and the school development plan. I had a telephone conversation with a local authority representative and considered a record of a visit from a school improvement adviser and a peer review. I considered parents' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 32 free-text comments. I studied the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires. Together, we visited all classes across the school. With you and your deputy, I scrutinised a range of books from pupils of differing abilities. I reviewed a range of documentation, including those linked to safeguarding, action plans, external reviews, the school's current performance, governor monitoring and internal monitoring. I reviewed information on the school's website.