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Mrs Jo Buckle
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Buckle

Short inspection of St Martin's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 March 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You lead a very committed team of staff. All staff who responded to the staff survey said that they were proud to work at the school. You know your staff and pupils well and you monitor the quality of teaching and learning effectively and are very thorough in your approach. When we observed lessons together you identified areas for improvement and I have every confidence that these will be acted upon. You are supported in your work by a hard working and knowledgeable governing body, which knows the school well.

The school is part of a federation of three primary schools, with one governing body. Your work, particularly in relation to setting up and running a federation, is very well respected by both the diocese and the local authority and you have made a significant contribution as a system leader. However, both you and your governors ensure that the needs of the school come first and remain committed to improving the quality of education provided still further.

In your very thorough evaluation documents and in the school improvement plan, you identify your priorities for improvement. Governors are also clear in identifying these and in ensuring that they support you in implementing your plans.

The school maintains close relationships with parents, who have confidence in the school. Talking to parents as they dropped off their children, I heard nothing but praise for the school and its staff. One parent summed it up: 'It is a caring school. I

know my children are happy coming here.'

Children are well behaved. In lessons they engage with tasks willingly. At social times they make use of the play space you have available. Older pupils talked about how they felt responsible for helping the younger pupils.

At the last inspection the school was asked to make improvements in the teaching of writing and mathematics. The outcomes achieved by pupils indicate that this has been achieved. You were also challenged to further develop the leadership of teaching and learning. This was also achieved; for instance, one of your staff made a contribution to this through her role as a specialist leader in education for literacy. This member of staff moved to a promoted post last summer, but you are able to use the resources of the whole federation to lead developments at St Martin's.

Safeguarding is effective.

As headteacher, working with your team, you have ensured that all policies are kept up to date and that your procedures are fit for purpose. You and your colleagues work extremely well together and have created a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. This is underpinned by the deep knowledge you have of the community you serve. Staff are diligently aware of their roles and responsibilities when it comes to safeguarding pupils. Records are thorough and meticulously kept, including those on recruiting staff.

You drew my attention to the work of the learning and development mentor who provides invaluable support for pupils. Her work is having a real impact in supporting pupils who are experiencing difficulties and in helping identify conditions before they become a major barrier to a pupil succeeding. Governors fully understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. They carry out spot checks and ensure that action is taken to keep children safe, even if this means equipment not being used until they are sure it is safe.

Pupils feel safe and they are happy at school. They enjoy coming to school and do so on a regular basis. Pupils commented on the fact that bullying is rare and that they feel confident that if they have any worries or concerns an adult would sort them out swiftly. To ensure that pupils understand about keeping themselves safe online, you have organised a cyber buddies scheme. Year 6 pupils have received training and they lead assemblies and workshops for younger pupils and this work has also involved sessions with parents. Pupils involved in this initiative are very proud of their contribution. Pupils are overwhelmingly positive and are proud to be a part of this inclusive, happy school community with its strong Christian ethos.

Inspection findings

- Pupils are making good progress in mathematics at key stage 2. Older pupils are confident in their knowledge of their times tables. Some younger pupils need to better understand the task they are trying to complete and need to be given the confidence to use the equipment provided. You are developing materials to

deepen pupils' understanding of mathematical operations and teachers are receiving training in this, so that more pupils are able to make greater progress at key stage 1, including reaching the higher level, which is called greater depth.

- Pupils are making good progress with their writing. This is supported by careful teaching of punctuation, spelling and grammar. More opportunities could be made for older pupils to write extended pieces.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development in the early years has been in line with, but not above, the national average over the last three years. In this time, the proportion of children reaching the early learning goal for reading has declined. You have recognised improving this as a priority in the school's current improvement plans.
- In 2017, pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 2 in reading was below the national average. The school responded with a comprehensive action plan which saw outcomes improve substantially in 2018. Interventions are tailored to individual pupils. For instance, children are responding to rewards that are personal to them such as stickers in a book. However, this work needs to be consolidated. When listening to pupils read, they did not have sufficient fluency for their age and ability. In the guided reading programme, opportunities are missed to encourage a love of reading. The focus on comprehension of short text extracts means that pupils do not get to know the story and characters or make links with their learning across the wider curriculum.
- The school offers a wide range of curriculum experiences to its children and pupils. The outside area for the Nursery and Reception children has been redeveloped. A forest school facility is available to enrich the curriculum of all pupils.
- The sports premium funding is used to ensure that there are opportunities for pupils to participate in sport, including team games. Older pupils were engaged in a football practice at lunchtime on the day of the inspection in preparation for a match against another school. There has also been a trip to the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield.
- All pupils learn a tuned musical instrument at key stage 2 and many participate in the choir. French is taught to all pupils.
- There are exciting plans to develop the breadth of the curriculum still further with art, engineering and archaeological opportunities. However, in the subjects that are covered in topic work, more thought and planning are needed. Pupils are doing too many discrete pieces of work that lack coherence and do not develop appropriate subject-specific skills and knowledge.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportion of children reaching the early learning goal for reading improves further so that more children are better prepared for key stage 1
- improvements in reading are consolidated so that more pupils read with

confidence and fluency and develop a love of reading

- teachers give careful consideration to the curriculum for topic work so that pupils develop appropriate subject-specific knowledge and skills.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Cummings
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher and other leaders, including governors, to evaluate the strengths and areas for development across the school. We also discussed the actions taken to improve mathematics, writing and leadership of the school since the previous inspection. Together, we visited all classes in each phase of the school. I discussed these observations with you and I reviewed a wide range of work in pupils' books, particularly in English and topic work. I spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, about their learning and experiences of school. I listened to a group of pupils read. I read and scrutinised a wide range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document and the school's development plan. I also scrutinised documents relating to behaviour, safeguarding and child protection. I spoke to parents and staff. I considered the 12 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 15 responses to Parent View as well as 17 responses to the pupil survey.