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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mr Jonathan Austin
Headteacher
St Anne's Church of England Primary School, Grantham
Harrowby Road
Grantham
Lincolnshire
NG31 9ED

Dear Mr Austin

Short inspection of St Anne's Church of England Primary School, Grantham

Following my visit to the school on 13 June 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Under your strong, confident leadership, the school continues to grow and flourish. You and your staff have successfully created a school community that is both nurturing and a place of high-quality learning.

The school's ethos and values permeate everything it does. It is clear that you have the highest expectations of staff and pupils. There is a strong culture of mutual respect and support. Leaders, including governors, have a clear vision for the school, which promotes the development of the whole child within a caring community based on Christian values.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they learn in a calm, orderly environment. Relationships between pupils and adults are extremely positive. Pupils told me that they enjoy school and feel happy and safe. One pupil said: 'I love coming to this school because the learning is fun and the staff help me.' Teachers plan interesting learning activities, and the pupils enjoy being challenged. For example, in Year 5, teaching skilfully deepened and enriched pupils' understanding of calculating the angles in quadrilaterals. In Reception, during an interactive and musical session, children used their knowledge of letters and sounds to read unknown words.

The previous inspection report highlighted the school's many strengths including effective leadership and pupils' behaviour. You have maintained these strengths. Many parents and carers commented on how happy their children are at St Anne's. One parent wrote: 'My children are happy to come to school every day and the teachers and staff are approachable. I always recommend this school to other parents.' Pupils told me how much they enjoy attending St Anne's Primary. They relish many aspects of school life including the exciting curriculum and school trips.

Your detailed self-evaluation clearly identifies the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Areas in the school improvement plan are being tackled effectively, and the governors monitor progress and ensure that the school continues to be on track. You have identified the need to continue the developments in the teaching of mathematics so that pupils can be taught how to use and apply their knowledge of calculation more effectively.

You have successfully addressed the improvement areas identified in the previous inspection report. Leaders have ensured that the checks on the quality of teaching are detailed and precise and that actions for improvement are carried out. Curriculum planning is comprehensive, and its impact is seen in every classroom. Pupils' books and school displays show a breadth and variety of learning. Pupils told me that they enjoy their learning and the curriculum, which the school has devised to interest them and help them to learn.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the leadership team have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. You have established good systems for securing the safety of pupils. You are committed to ensuring that pupils are safe at all times and that a culture of safeguarding is evident throughout the school.

Leaders ensure that staff receive appropriate training and that they understand their responsibilities. Governors check procedures regularly and ensure that the vetting of staff complies with national guidelines. Parents appreciate the lengths to which you go to provide an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere in which every child is valued and cherished.

Parents, staff and pupils are united in their view that pupils are safe in school. There are well-planned opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep safe, including learning about online safety. Pupils are confident that any instances of bullying will be followed up quickly and sensitively by staff.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I met with you and the school's deputy headteacher to discuss the school's progress since the last inspection. We agreed the following lines of enquiry: how effectively leaders have improved pupils' progress in mathematics; how well leaders have improved pupils' progress in reading,

particularly for disadvantaged pupils; and what actions leaders have carried out to improve phonics at the school. I also looked at the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

- Pupils show very positive attitudes to learning. They know what is expected of them in their learning and in their behaviour. They gain confidence in a caring environment with high expectations. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, both academically and socially.
- Leaders responded swiftly to some slightly disappointing mathematics results at the end of key stage 2 in 2017. Some pupils did not make as much progress in mathematics as pupils did nationally. Leaders identified that some of these pupils had been new to St Anne's, but also that the school's approach to the teaching of mathematics needed some improvements. Leaders have introduced a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics, which focuses on deep conceptual understanding and problem-solving skills. During our visits to lessons, we observed that there is a great deal of high-quality teaching in the school. During tasks, teachers check pupils' depth of understanding, appropriately readjusting activities if required. However, leaders are not complacent. They are aware that although pupils generally calculate very efficiently, more opportunities are needed for pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding to more abstract concepts.
- My second line of enquiry checked what leaders are doing to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress in reading. I wanted to look at this because in 2017 results at the end of key stage 2 showed that disadvantaged pupils did not make as much progress in reading as other pupils in the school. I found that you have established good systems to support both the academic and social development of disadvantaged pupils and that their needs are met well most of the time. Pupils enjoy reading and engage well with books, because reading material is matched closely to their needs. Pupils told me that they enjoy the support that they receive from staff and the questions which they are asked about the books they read. When reading, pupils used their phonic skills to read unknown words and generally read with fluency, expression and understanding. Leaders track pupils' progress closely and agreed with me that there is still more to be done to improve the reading progress of disadvantaged pupils, so that their reading is at least as good as that of their peers.
- In Year 1 and in Year 2 in 2017, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in phonics was above that seen nationally. Leaders have ensured that the school's organisation of the teaching of phonics enables pupils to achieve well. Staff have received regular training and make learning very active and exciting for the pupils. As a result, pupils acquire skills quickly and use their knowledge of letters and sounds when reading independently. Current assessment information indicates that pupils are performing well. Leaders' actions in driving improvements in the teaching of phonics have contributed to pupils' achievements in phonics and in the development of their early reading skills. The pupils I spoke with were enthusiastic about reading and could talk in detail about their favourite books and authors.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvements in mathematics continue, so that pupils further develop their understanding of abstract concepts.
- the school continues to evaluate the teaching of reading so that any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding can be addressed and their progress accelerated.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and 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

Damien Turrell
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, your deputy headteacher, and two governors. I spoke with a representative of the local diocese. Together, we visited classes across the school. I reviewed samples of pupils' work from the early years and key stages 1 and 2. I considered the 18 responses by staff to Ofsted's online survey. I took account of the 40 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the 38 free-text comments. I also had conversations with parents dropping off their children at the beginning of the school day. I spoke with pupils during playtime and reviewed the 47 responses by pupils to Ofsted's online survey. I looked at a range of documentation including: attendance information; the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; monitoring information on teaching quality; information about pupils' learning and progress; minutes of meetings; and records regarding safeguarding.