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Mr Sam Eden
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Eden

Short inspection of Ancaster CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 January 2017, 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 2013.

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 ambitious leadership, the school has thrived. You, ably supported by your deputy headteacher, have successfully created a culture where learning is for everyone at Ancaster. Governors access appropriate training, pupils say that their learning is fun and staff told me, 'there is a love of learning for staff'. This culture is befitting of your school motto, 'be the best you can be'.

You and your leaders promote a sense of being part of a community at Ancaster Church of England Primary School. Pupils are currently involved in the village 'station adoption scheme', for example. They are involved in planting and tending to flowers at the railway station. Parents described the school as having a 'family feel' and pupils told me, 'we're like a family'. Parents value the opportunity to come into school to work alongside their children and to attend assemblies to celebrate their children's achievements. They appreciate the timely manner in which staff respond to their queries.

At the time of the last inspection, inspectors recognised that pupils' rates of attendance were above the national average and that pupils behave well. This is still the case. Attendance has not only continued to be above the national average but has increased year-on-year. Pupils I spoke with agree that behaviour is good. During my tour of the school, pupils demonstrated courtesy in their interactions

with adults and their peers. Their good behaviour was evident in classrooms and as they moved around school.

Following the last inspection, leaders were asked to eradicate inconsistencies in teaching, to ensure that the work set for pupils was at the correct level for them and to ensure that subject leaders take a more active role in improving their subject areas. You have successfully addressed each of these areas for improvement.

During our tour of the classrooms to see the learning that was taking place, teachers and teaching assistants were using resources and well-thought-out questions effectively. This helped to make sure that pupils understood the ideas that were being taught. Pupils of all ages told me that the work they were given was just right for them and that they receive additional help if they need it.

As we examined pupils' books together, you and I agreed that there is scope for subject leaders to delve deeper into provision for pupils across a range of subjects and for teachers to have higher expectations of pupils' presentation.

Recently, you and your leaders noticed that progress in reading could be improved. You have wasted no time in addressing this. The leader with responsibility for English has provided teachers and teaching assistants with useful training so that they can target specific reading skills when they are teaching reading. She is now ready to check closely that this strategy is being implemented fully and making a difference to pupils' progress in reading. A bright and welcoming new library has been introduced in the school's reception area. Pupils told me that they like reading and are looking forward to making full use of their new library. School assessment information shows that pupils of all ages are making good progress in their reading so far this year.

The school governors are as ambitious for the pupils as you are. They know the school's strengths and current priorities well. This is because they take time to check the work of the school for themselves and to ask challenging questions of the leadership team. Governors have a clear understanding of their strategic responsibilities and undertake the appropriate training to be able to execute these responsibilities effectively. They offer a good balance of challenge and support to the school leaders.

The school environment is bright and welcoming and supports the ethos of learning that you have created. Displays around the school celebrate the work that pupils have completed across a range of subjects. In the school hall, script on the walls reminds pupils of the school's core values of friendship, achievement, respect, creativity and honesty. In classrooms, walls are adorned with information that supports pupils learning, for example in mathematics, spelling or grammar. During my visit to classrooms, I saw pupils making good use of the information teachers have provided on display to support their learning.

Parents who spoke with me or gave their views through the online survey, Parent View, were, almost without exception, praiseworthy of the school. They commented

on the positive relationships between staff and pupils and between staff and families. They explained to me that they feel welcome in school and that staff are always accessible, if parents want to talk about their child.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is of the highest priority at Ancaster Church of England Primary School. It is a standing agenda item for meetings with staff to ensure that they keep it at the forefront of their thinking. All staff receive the necessary training so that they know the signs to look for and how to report potential concerns about a child's welfare. You make sure that all the appropriate vetting checks take place when staff start working at the school. Governors have also received training in safeguarding and are knowledgeable about potential issues and dangers. Your records are detailed and well kept. Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils I spoke with could describe how to keep themselves safe, for example when they are using modern technology. They told me that they are taught how to keep themselves safe on the roads, through the 'bikeability' scheme.

Inspection findings

- You employ a system to check how well pupils are doing across a range of aspects of school life. This tracks not only the academic progress pupils are making in reading, writing and mathematics but also their attitudes to learning and their attendance, for example. The system is effectively used, as pupils say that they can see that the discussions they have with staff help them to understand what they need to do to improve further.
- As you check on the progress pupils are making, you and your deputy headteacher hold regular meetings with teachers to discuss pupils' progress and make sure that any pupils who are falling behind have the support they need to catch up. Your records, and work in pupils' books, show that pupils are making good progress this year.
- The deputy headteacher keeps a very close check on the progress that disadvantaged pupils make. She ensures that disadvantaged pupils, of all abilities, receive the support they need and access to experiences that will help them to flourish. Assessment information shows that these pupils make good progress. She has plans to improve the targeting of additional government funding for these pupils by working more closely with parents.
- You have started to develop the role of subject leaders further. The deputy headteacher provides helpful coaching for subject leaders and they are allocated time to check on the provision of their subject across the school. As a result, they are improving their leadership skills. They do not, however, have a clear method of checking the progress that pupils, of all abilities, make from their starting points. There is scope for their role to be fully developed so that they can be held to account for the progress pupils make in their areas of responsibility.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers fully implement the recent developments in the teaching of reading so that pupils make good progress from their different starting points
- teachers insist on the highest standards of presentation of work from pupils across all subjects
- subject leaders check carefully the progress pupils make in the subjects for which they are responsible so that these leaders can be held to account for the progress pupils are making.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Lincoln and the director of children's services for Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Di Mullan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, leaders with responsibility for English and mathematics and four other members of staff. I held meetings with six members of the governing body, including the chair, a representative from the local authority and a representative from the charity INSPIRE+, which provides sporting opportunities for the school.

I visited all the classrooms with you to see the learning that was taking place. I scrutinised a selection of pupils' books with you and the deputy headteacher. I examined a range of documentation, including the school development plan, the school's self-evaluation document and minutes of governors' meetings. I also scrutinised documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils.

I spoke with parents as they brought their children to school and took account of their views through the online survey, Parent View. I also took account of the views of staff through their online survey. There were no responses to the pupils' survey.