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Mr Daniel Kinsey
Headteacher
Lisle Marsden Church of England Primary Academy
Lansdowne Avenue
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North East Lincolnshire
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Dear Mr Kinsey

Short inspection of Lisle Marsden Church of England Primary Academy

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 July 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your leadership team are highly ambitious in your view of what pupils can achieve and are determined to facilitate pupils' success. Pupils' outcomes in 2016 and 2017 are a clear indication of the effectiveness of leadership of English and mathematics. Despite the high standards that pupils reach in these subjects, you remain committed to improving the quality of teaching further. The aspirational ethos that you have created in the school is readily adopted by staff and pupils. The result is an atmosphere of high expectations, where pupils and staff alike show a desire for continual improvement.

Alongside this endeavour for high standards in teaching and learning, you have also sustained a caring, nurturing ethos within the school. As a result, pupils are empathetic and support each other well. They appreciate the warm atmosphere which staff create. One pupil described the school as their 'second home'. You also prioritise the development of responsible, knowledgeable pupils. In doing so, you provide a range of leadership roles for pupils, such as collective worship group representatives, who enjoy planning and leading assemblies. Parents and pupils also appreciate the range of extra-curricular opportunities available to pupils, such as membership of the Grimsby Minster Choir or participation in sporting activities. You effectively develop pupils' environmental awareness through arranging for them to work in the school's allotment, woodland, chicken coop and apiary.

Since the last inspection, you have built new teams of senior and middle leaders, who have received appropriate professional development opportunities. As a result,

they are instrumental in driving improvements in priority areas. You are fully aware that there is more work to do on the leadership of wider curriculum subjects in strengthening the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Governors share in your vision and are committed to driving improvements further. They are highly involved in the school and, as a result, know the strengths and priorities well. They use this insight to challenge leaders effectively. The strengths within leadership and governance are also used to good effect in supporting improvement in other schools.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils say that they feel safe in the school and are confident to share any concerns with a trusted adult. Most parents say that their children are happy in school and that children thrive under the guidance of the staff.

Leaders carry out appropriate checks on all adults working in the school to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Vulnerable pupils benefit from effective pastoral support and timely referrals to keep them safe from harm. Staff are vigilant in checking on pupils' well-being, and records with regards to this are well maintained. All staff have regular safeguarding training and you have plans in place to further strengthen their understanding of their responsibilities in relation to keeping pupils safe.

In lessons, pupils are keen to participate and are articulate when discussing their learning. They are attentive when listening to staff and peers, and are skilled in cooperating with others. When moving around the school and at breaktimes, they show polite manners and consideration for others.

Inspection findings

- Following the dip in children's outcomes at the end of the early years in 2017, you accurately identified that the teaching and learning of writing, particularly for boys and disadvantaged children, needed to improve. Leaders have tackled this area with appropriate urgency, pinpointing children's barriers to learning, and introducing strategies to overcome these. For example, activities to encourage specific aspects of children's physical development have been successful in ensuring that they have the muscle strength required for writing progression. Boys are now increasingly motivated to write through the wide range of enticing activities available. This was demonstrated during the inspection when writing labels and notes in relation to their fruit and vegetable stall. Other boys showed high levels of focus when choosing to write at length, inspired by the activities on offer relating to the World Cup football competition. School records evidence that this practice is typical now within early years. Adults engage children in quality conversations, effectively broadening children's vocabulary. This has been another crucial factor which has resulted in children, including boys and disadvantaged children, making stronger progress in developing their writing skills.

- At the previous inspection, you were asked to ensure that all pupils, including the most able, receive work which challenges them. In mathematics, leaders have introduced a new approach to teaching and learning. Staff are now better equipped to pre-empt misconceptions, and they use appropriate models and images within their explanations. As a result, pupils grasp mathematical concepts more quickly and are stretched to tackle increasingly difficult activities. In key stage 2, pupils have regular opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to problem-solving or reasoning contexts. However, in key stage 1, because this aspect of mathematics is developed verbally, pupils' participation is not maximised.
- A group of middle leaders have been influential in driving improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment of writing by introducing a teaching sequence for staff to follow. Within this, the 'immersion' phase, involving drama, characterisation and research, effectively stimulates pupils' ideas and provides pupils with interesting content to use in their writing.
- Leaders also correctly prioritised the development of pupils' understanding of English grammar, punctuation and spelling as a part of their new approach. As such, teachers are increasingly adept at providing suitably challenging work in this area. Pupils are developing a secure understanding of grammar, in particular, and use this to discuss improvements to their writing with their teachers. Pupils also have regular opportunities to practise their skills by writing at length, during which they are challenged to edit and improve their work. As a result, pupils make strong progress in writing.
- This same group of leaders has recently focused its attention on further improving the level of challenge for pupils in reading. The leaders rightly identified that pupils would benefit from developing their inference skills to support their understanding of books and texts. Leaders have recently introduced a new approach to teaching this aspect of reading, and the initial signs are positive. However, it is too early for them to measure the impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders are working from a strong position to make these further improvements to reading, writing and mathematics, since pupils' outcomes for 2016 and 2017 were very positive for key stage 1 and 2. By the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment was in line with or just above average for reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment and progress were above average, with progress in writing and mathematics being in the top 20% of schools for the last two years. In 2017, the attainment of the most able pupils was above average in all subjects by the end of key stage 2, and in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 1.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have re-designed the curriculum. By carefully selecting interesting themes, they have successfully enthused pupils, who were keen to share their knowledge about topics such as slavery and famous scientists. In wider curriculum subjects, pupils have regular opportunities to develop subject-specific skills, for example through map work in geography. However, the systems used to assess pupils' learning for wider curriculum subjects are underdeveloped. Therefore, pupils do not always receive work which

is matched to their needs and which is suitably challenging. Pupils have regular opportunities to apply their reading and writing skills in these subjects. However, the quality of writing that pupils produce in their topic books is not always of the standard of which they are capable.

- At the last inspection, you were also challenged to improve the quality of teaching and the resulting progress for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. The special educational needs coordinator has a firm understanding of the needs of individuals within this group. He is effective in ensuring that teachers set suitable targets for pupils, and he supports teachers in reviewing these at regular intervals. He regularly checks on the quality of the provision that pupils receive, provides useful advice to staff and involves the support of external agencies where appropriate. As a result of these improvements, the majority of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have successfully ensured that, by the time they reach the end of key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils have made rapid progress and often outperform other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. In-school assessment information reflects that, in some year groups, disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment lags behind that of their in-school peers. In order to tackle this, leaders spend pupil premium funding on a range of targeted interventions, including specialist support from a speech and language therapist, additional English and mathematics sessions and pastoral support. They also provide subsidies to ensure that disadvantaged pupils can access all educational trips and music tuition. However, leaders, including governors, do not currently check carefully enough on the impact of their actions for this group of pupils. Therefore, they cannot evaluate accurately whether the additional funding is being spent effectively.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching, learning and assessment in wider curriculum subjects are improved so that all pupils, particularly the most able, receive work which challenges them to develop their subject-specific skills and apply the reading, writing and mathematical skills of which they are capable
- pupil premium funding is spent effectively to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils at all stages of their learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Karine Hendley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, a group of governors and other senior and middle leaders. I also spoke on the telephone to the school effectiveness officer from the Diocese of Lincoln. I observed teaching and learning jointly with you and other leaders in classes across all key stages. I scrutinised pupils' work alongside English leaders and phase leaders and listened to pupils read. I spoke to pupils from each key stage and considered the 67 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. I met with parents at the start of the school day and took account of the 128 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 71 free-text responses. I reviewed school documentation, including the school's improvement plans, minutes from governing body meetings and information about pupils' progress, attainment, behaviour and attendance. I spoke with staff during the inspection and considered the 49 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.