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Mr John Whalley
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Dear Mr Whalley

Short inspection of St Andrew's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 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 February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Pupils continue to learn and achieve well. The very large majority of parents and carers with whom I spoke, or who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, praised the school's warm, friendly atmosphere, and the approachability of staff. Parents are very positive about their children's learning and development.

You, your senior leadership team and other staff are committed to driving continued improvement. You have built a cohesive leadership team. Leaders and the governing body accurately evaluate the school's strengths and identify appropriate priorities for improvement.

At the last inspection, the school was asked to strengthen some aspects of teaching by sharing the best practice within the school and with other schools. You have ensured that staff have received a wide range of training and development, including joint work with colleagues. 'Peer review' work with staff in local schools has helped to share expertise and develop leadership roles. The 'maths class swap' initiative, in which teachers teach a colleague's class, has deepened teachers' understanding of standards and enabled them to reflect on and refine their own practice. Leaders and other staff lead a range of staff meetings to help raise standards. This includes work to develop the mathematics curriculum and teaching methods, approaches to giving pupils feedback on their learning, the assessment of pupils' learning and approaches to teaching grammar. There has also been significant work to develop further the effectiveness of teaching assistants. Staff are

very positive about the training and support they receive. There is a strong sense of a whole-school 'team'. The training provided is bringing about improvements in the quality of teaching and of the effectiveness of leaders.

Leaders were also asked to ensure that teachers more effectively check pupils' learning and move them on to subsequent, more difficult tasks when they are ready. Teachers have improved their skills in assessing pupils' learning and using this information to plan activities and make checks on pupils' learning. In the lessons you and I visited, we saw how most teachers planned activities that were matched well to different pupils' needs. We also saw that sometimes teachers did not do this as sharply as they might. As a result, some pupils' progress was not as rapid as it could have been.

The school was asked to continue to focus on accelerating the progress of disadvantaged pupils, those who arrive part-way through their education and the most able. You and other staff have introduced a rigorous approach to assessing the attainment and progress of individuals and groups of pupils. You hold detailed meetings with teachers to discuss the progress of each pupil. You identify pupils who may be falling behind and the actions needed to help them catch up. As a result, these pupils make stronger progress.

The pupil premium funding is used to pay for a range of support for disadvantaged pupils, including additional teaching and a learning mentor. These help pupils to progress academically, as well as in their personal development and well-being. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that these pupils are supported well. Current school information and work in pupils' books show that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is improving. Overall, these pupils are making progress similar to that of other pupils. However, the school's published pupil premium strategy is not as sharply focused as it could be to help support the accelerated progress of this group of pupils. The strategy does not make clear enough the impact leaders and governors wish to see. As a result, the governing body is not effective as it could be in checking the impact of this spending nor in holding leaders to account.

You and other staff have ensured that pupils benefit from a curriculum that is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, drama and music. Pupils and parents spoke of the rich experiences the school provides. These make a strong contribution to pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their personal development.

Safeguarding is effective.

This is a school with an ethos of mutual respect. Relationships are strong. Pupils behave very well, and are sensible at all times of the school day. At breaktimes, pupils play happily together and say that bullying is very rare. They are very confident that teachers will help them to sort out any problems they may have. Pupils spoke with confidence about how the school teaches them to keep themselves safe, for example, when online, and in relation to road safety or 'stranger danger'. Parents were nearly unanimous in their view that the school keeps their children safe.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The governing body regularly checks that arrangements are secure. Staff receive regular training in child protection. The school's single central record of recruitment checks and recruitment processes are very thorough. School systems for recording concerns are also thorough. Leaders take timely action when they have concerns about pupils' welfare and well-being.

Inspection findings

- The pupils' current work and the school's information show that the majority of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and the most able, are making good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and other subjects. In mathematics, there is clear evidence of the impact of leaders' and staff's work to promote a 'mastery' curriculum. Many pupils spoke with pride about their improved handwriting. Pupils' presentation of their work is strong across the school. Pupils show 'stamina' in writing, and write at length in a range of subjects. Teachers are skilled in promoting pupils' comprehension skills in reading.
- A line of enquiry I explored with you and senior leaders was the progress that pupils make in their writing. While broadly average, at the end of key stage 2, pupils' progress in writing was slower than that in reading and mathematics, and less good than for the previous year. You have rightly identified improving pupils' progress in writing as a priority in your improvement plans and have taken actions to improve standards. However, current school information shows that pupils' progress in writing overall is still not as strong as it is in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' current work shows that the often very strong content of their writing is sometimes let down by weaker spelling, grammar and punctuation. Initiatives to improve the quality of writing are having a positive impact. However, this is not consistently evident. Teachers sometimes do not rigorously challenge pupils to check and improve their work, nor to apply their skills and understanding in ways appropriate to their ability. As a result, some pupils' progress in writing is not as rapid as it could be.
- Pupils' behaviour is of a high standard in lessons and on the playground. Pupils are caring, confident and reflective. Pupils understand the school's work to promote values. Pupils in Year 6 told me about their understanding of rights, responsibilities and the importance of respecting others: 'We all have the same rights. It is not fair if we don't respect certain people'. The school prepares them well for life in modern Britain. However, by the end of key stage 2, some pupils are less confident in their understanding of the British value of democracy than they should be.
- A further line of enquiry explored during the inspection was attendance. At the end of 2017, attendance, including that for disadvantaged pupils, was below the national average. Leaders regularly check on attendance and are robust in emphasising to parents the importance of good attendance. They have developed a wide range of actions, including support for families whose children are persistently absent. They have made very clear to parents that they will

challenge poor attendance. As a result of leaders' actions, the attendance for pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, is improving and is now close to the national average.

- When we observed teaching and learning and looked at pupils' work, we saw that teachers are enthusiastic and have secure subject knowledge, which they often use well to engage pupils' interest, check on pupils' learning and extend their understanding. As a result, pupils are keen to learn. Teaching assistants provide effective support, particularly when working with groups of pupils and individuals.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the plans for the use of the pupil premium enable leaders and governors to hold staff to account more effectively
- teachers consistently teach pupils the skills they need to edit and improve their writing
- teachers consistently expect pupils to use accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation in their writing, in ways appropriate to their abilities, in English lessons and other subjects.

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

John Lawson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I scrutinised a variety of documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' attainment and progress, staff performance and the school's self-evaluation document and its plans for improvement. I assessed the impact on standards of leaders' actions taken since the last inspection, as well as additional lines of enquiry. I looked at the range and quality of information provided on the school's website. I considered the 82 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, as well as the 32 parent comments made through the Ofsted free-text service. I also considered the 24 responses to the staff questionnaire.

I met with you, the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, and four governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with parents at the

beginning of the day. I met with pupils informally during the school day, as well as in a formal meeting with a group of pupils. Together, we observed teaching and learning in seven lessons. During these visits, I looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils to evaluate the quality of their learning. I also examined with you, the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, pupils' work in a sample of their books.