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7 November 2017

Mrs Claire Barber  
Acting headteacher  
Hawsker Cum Stainsacre Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School  
Hawsker  
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North Yorkshire  
YO22 4LA

Dear Mrs Barber

### **Short inspection of Hawsker Cum Stainsacre Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 17 October 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 June 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school has experienced considerable changes in leadership and staffing over the last year during the long-term absence of the substantive headteacher. The effective partnership between school leaders, governors, the local authority and the diocese has ensured that the quality of education and care of the pupils have been of the upmost importance during these changes. Outcomes for pupils continue to be strong.

Pupils enjoy their learning and speak proudly of their school and their friendships. They show support and respect for each other. They say that staff make their learning fun and that they feel well cared for. Most parents and carers have a positive view of the learning experiences that their children have. They say that communication about their child's progress and events in the school is good. A substantial number of parents say that changes over the last year have been unsettling. You and other leaders are very eager to develop and build on positive partnerships between home and school.

As the acting headteacher since September 2017, you have worked closely with the previous acting headteacher to share recent actions and plans for improvement. As a result, the start to this term has been a very positive one, for pupils and staff. You bring a clear, ambitious vision for the school. You are motivating staff and pupils to join you in the school's journey to being the very best it can be. You value the

things that are already working well within the school, but know what to do to bring about further improvement. Your priorities for improvement are the right ones.

There is a real sense of working together, within the school and beyond. You look for creative opportunities to use resources and expertise between this school and Fylingdales Church of England Primary School, where you are the headteacher. Your links with the Esk Valley Teaching School Alliance, the local community and other schools across the authority bring further opportunities for the sharing of ideas and expertise. The local authority has, rightly, been closely involved with the school over the last year, providing guidance in teaching and learning, as well as supporting leadership and well-being within the school. Links with the diocese have also strengthened, further widening opportunities and experiences for the pupils and staff.

At the last inspection, leaders were tasked with improving the overall quality of teaching. Teachers were asked to help pupils know how to be successful in lessons, give clear points for improvement and improve challenge in lessons so that all pupils make the best possible progress. In a small school with small numbers of pupils in some year groups, some variation can arise, but standards in general across school have continued to improve. The proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading and writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with and often better than the national averages. There is some variability in the proportions of pupils reaching higher standards across subjects, although provisional 2017 results show that this is improving. Teachers' direction to pupils about what they need to do to get better has improved. Teachers have a good understanding of the demands of the national expectations in English and mathematics and have raised their expectations of pupils accordingly. For example, pupils' work in key stage 1 shows clear evidence of teachers' high expectations in the basic spelling and punctuation that pupils use. We agreed that the direction given to pupils, particularly those of higher ability, needs to be more closely matched to their individual needs.

Another area highlighted for improvement at the last inspection was the raising of standards in mathematics. The provisional end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 results for 2017 show that, in relation to national averages, a higher proportion of pupils reached expected and higher standards in mathematics. Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 is now consistently in line with or better than the national average. Pupils' current work and their books from last year show higher teachers' expectations in the accuracy of pupils' calculation. Frequent practice and recall are having a positive impact on the speed and fluency of pupils' work in mathematics. Teachers and teaching assistants are encouraging pupils to use their mathematical skills across other aspects of the curriculum. For example, during my visit, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 were applying their mathematical skills to challenging tasks about Captain Cook and his journey on the Endeavour. Children in Reception were using their mathematical skills in the vegetable tray, counting the vegetables, sorting them, working out who had the most and finding out if there were enough for everyone in the group. Some good examples were seen of older pupils selecting strategies to apply to a problem and giving reasons for their choices. However,

leaders agree that this work needs to be more frequent and consistent for pupils across all ages and abilities.

Your work in the school over the last few weeks has informed you about the next steps that the school needs to take. Your creative plans to develop middle leadership effectively within the challenges of a small school have already started. You know that a more thorough process of checking the quality of teaching and learning, and meeting regularly with teachers about the progress that pupils are making, will result in an improved understanding of where additional support or challenge may be needed. In turn, this improved precision in checking the progress of actions identified on the school improvement plan will inform governors of the checks that they need to make on the actions that leaders have taken.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that policies and practices in safeguarding are effective. They consult with the local authority for guidance and checks on their work. Regular training and updates make sure that everyone knows how to be vigilant about keeping pupils safe.

Records of concerns, incidents and work with other agencies are of high quality and frequently checked by leaders. Leaders make careful safety checks, for example, on the school site and when organising a school visit. Where any aspect poses a potential risk, they undertake a thorough risk assessment and put appropriate measures in place to address these.

Pupils talk about a range of ways that they are taught to keep safe. They say that all the staff are very helpful and would always give advice or support if they needed it. All the pupils spoken to say that bullying does not happen in the school. They say that any minor fall-outs are quickly resolved. Pupils are taught how to keep safe when crossing the road and when using the internet. They are also taught how to keep safe in their local community, for example about strangers and keeping safe near the sea.

### **Inspection findings**

- During the inspection, I looked at the progress that pupils are making in writing, particularly those of higher ability. The high importance given to developing early literacy skills when children enter school, and throughout key stage 1, gives them a positive start to improving their reading and writing skills. The early years and key stage 1 classroom is full of direction, resources and activities that promote the development of writing. The positive impact of revised and improved routines in the teaching of phonics can be seen in pupils' written work. Adults have high expectations of pupils in terms of the presentation of work and the use of basic spelling and punctuation. For example, adults are kindly persistent in their reminders about correct letter formation and the use of full stops and capital letters. This determination pays off: pupils of all abilities make strong progress in writing through the early years and key stage 1. In key stage 2, pupils have

opportunities to write in a wide range of styles through exciting topics and activities. They are given direction for improvement that is appropriate for their age. Pupils are encouraged to edit and improve their own work and their books show that they are becoming more successful at this. Pupils, particularly those of higher ability, now need targets and direction that are more closely matched to the next steps that they need to take, so that they know exactly what to do to make their writing better.

- Pupils are motivated and excited by their learning across the curriculum. Pupils' confidence in sharing their thoughts, making links between subjects and applying their skills to new activities is growing rapidly. Well-planned visits, and visitors coming into school, support pupils' learning. Displays in the classrooms and around the school celebrate pupils' work across the curriculum. High-quality pieces of writing across the curriculum, including letters, accounts, newspaper articles and instructions, are high profile. Many pupils say that they enjoy the homework activities. These purposeful tasks, including practical and recorded activities, support learning across a variety of subjects.
- Governors know the school well. They have worked hard with the local authority to keep children at the heart of their work and to try to stabilise the unforeseen challenges in changing leadership. They know what the school does well and are clear about the areas for improvement, including the ways in which they can improve their own knowledge and practice.
- The attendance of pupils is consistently just below the national average. Leaders' analysis shows that a large proportion of this absence relates to term-time holidays. Governors and school leaders are aware of where any attendance is less than good and have started work to address this. You have comprehensive strategies, which you say you have used successfully in the past, that you are ready to put in place to support pupils in better attendance.
- At the time of the inspection, the website was under reconstruction, and most of the expected content was not available online. However, I was able to access all of the relevant information in paper form within the school. Leaders have started work with a new website provider to improve this form of communication, to provide information and celebrate the school's work.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans to strengthen the leadership of the school are actioned, making sure that senior and middle leaders have tight plans for improvement that are regularly checked by leaders and governors for the impact that they are having on improving outcomes for pupils
- higher-ability pupils are supported and challenged in the next steps that they need to take to reach higher standards across the curriculum
- work to improve mathematics outcomes continues, with a focus on pupils selecting the strategies that they need to apply to problems and being able to

give reasons for their choices

- partnerships between school and parents and carers are strengthened.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of York, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kate Rowley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

You and I worked closely together throughout the inspection. We were joined by the previous acting headteacher, who left the school at the end of the summer term 2017. We observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and discussed the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. We discussed the changes in the interim leadership arrangements that have taken place over the last year. I looked at specific aspects of the school's work, including leadership, the quality of teaching and learning throughout school, and safeguarding arrangements.

I reviewed school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding. I met with pupils, staff, representatives from the governing body, representatives from the local authority and the school diocesan adviser. I considered the 10 staff's responses and the 50 pupils' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires. I spoke to several parents in person, and on the telephone. I took into account the 26 responses to Parent View as well as letters from parents.