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Mr Paul Edwards  
Headteacher  
St Martin's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School  
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Dear Mr Edwards

### **Short inspection of St Martin's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 26 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 November 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

St Martin's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a small school characterised by its warm, caring and welcoming atmosphere. The pupils are at the heart of every aspect of school life. Every pupil is highly valued and known well by you and the other staff. There is a deep commitment from all staff to unlock the potential in every child. As a result, all pupils are supported to develop compassion, trust, responsibility and creativity, and, as your school vision states: 'a little bit of Heaven on Earth'.

You lead the school with energy and enthusiasm and have the respect of pupils, parents, carers and staff alike. Governors talk highly of your reflective manner and tenacity to ensure that all pupils experience a high-quality education within a nurturing environment. You ensure that this school is a harmonious place to be.

You have a good working knowledge of the school's everyday matters, as well as the strategic overview needed to shape and ensure further improvements. Despite some unforeseen turbulence in staffing this year, you continued to successfully deal with the areas for improvement from the last inspection including making sure pupils responded to feedback from teachers. As a result, you have maintained high standards as well as staff well-being. You and the governors evaluate the school's overall effectiveness accurately.

Consequently, governors have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. They have looked closely at their skills and have recently increased the governing body's capacity through some necessary appointments. As a result, governance is a strength of the school.

Teachers consistently create a positive climate for learning and have high expectations. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic and confident learners. Our visits to several classrooms provided good examples of this. In the early years class, children were discussing how they could extend words by joining them together. The children were able to explain clearly the difference between a park and a carpark. In the Year 1/2 science lesson, pupils were using accurate mathematical language to calculate the number of insects in a measured area on the field. Pupils were very excited to also tell me about the insects they had found and what they knew about their habitat and behaviour. Despite this, sometimes activities do not provide enough challenge for the middle prior attaining pupils, especially in mathematics. This contributes to some not reaching the high standards of which they are capable.

Children make excellent progress in their first year at school. The caring ethos of the school is mirrored in the early years. Adults have an excellent understanding of how young children learn. They listen carefully, observe their interests and fascinations and then skilfully capture this in their planning. The learning environments both indoors and outdoors are magnets for learning. Children enjoy countless opportunities to explore and think about their learning. As a result, children are very well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

I spoke with several parents at the beginning of the school day. Parents are unreservedly positive about the school and hold you in high regard. Parents particularly value the caring family ethos which you have created. One parent said: 'My child has made remarkable progress because it's a supportive and inspiring place to be.' Inspection evidence supports these positive views about the school.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons, at playtime and at lunch is excellent. The extensive grounds and good equipment mean that there is plenty for pupils to do during breaks. They play well together and the chapel barn, for quiet contemplation and prayer, is well used. Pupils were keen to talk to me and interested in asking me questions. They are welcoming and friendly and are rightly proud of their school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

You ensure that the safeguarding of pupils is a high priority. Staff are vetted carefully prior to appointment and all of the necessary checks are made to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. You have put in place regular and frequent training, including that relating to protecting pupils from extremism and radicalisation. All staff are highly vigilant and well aware of what actions they need

to take if they are concerned about a child's welfare. You are dogged in following up any concerns and work well with outside agencies to ensure that support is timely. Parents expressed their confidence in the school to follow up concerns. They told me that you do everything possible to ensure that their child is safe and happy.

Pupils have a good knowledge of potential bullying situations. Your policy, written for the pupils, is excellent in helping them understand exactly what bullying is. One pupil said, 'It's not about falling out with friends.' They are adamant that bullying does not exist at school. They say there is no poor behaviour, just some 'different children who are helped by us and teachers to behave better'. This is confirmed by the school's records. Pupils are taught effectively about how to keep themselves safe when they are using the internet. They know the immediate actions to take if they view anything that causes them concern.

Pupils' attendance is above the national average. They value their education and understand the importance of coming to school regularly and on time.

### **Inspection findings**

- You have created a culture of success at the school because your high expectations are clear to staff and pupils. As a result, pupils make good progress in their learning and are excited by the interesting curriculum on offer both during the school day and through the variety of after-school activities they can access.
- Governors are enthusiastic and form an effective team. They are committed to ensuring that the school provides a good education so pupils can thrive both academically and personally. Governors share your vision for further improvement. The governing body maintains a careful oversight of all the school's work and find out for themselves through regular visits gaining secure, first-hand knowledge of what's happening on the ground.
- You have an accurate picture of teaching across the school. Further improvements in teaching are at the heart of the school's work. You have rightly identified that not all teaching provides the right challenges especially for the middle prior attaining pupils in mathematics because they do not make as much progress as they should. You and your subject leader of mathematics are taking swift action to remedy this, which includes training from the local pathfinder school and good local authority support, advice and challenge. Through this process, you have identified that there is further work needed to secure problem solving and reasoning skills in mathematics for all pupils.
- Pupils' writing is good. Writing is securely embedded throughout the curriculum. Pupils' work shows that they are provided with a good range of stimuli for writing. Pupils know how to apply features of good writing across different genres. They use their technical skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation correctly. Pupils' handwriting and presentation are of a high standard. Eye-catching displays around the school celebrate high levels of confidence in writing for a variety of purposes.

- You have acted promptly to tackle the recent dip in reading attainment particularly at key stage 2. As a result of careful analysis of pupils' performance, you have put in place a wide range of actions. One example is the refurbished library. You are working effectively with parents to increase the time pupils spend reading, as well as making sure that there are challenging texts for pupils. Pupils read well and with confidence. It is clear that the good teaching of letters and sounds has given pupils the right tools to read well. Allied to this, your subject leader for English is ensuring that pupils understand and use good reading to model good writing. This was seen in a Year 5/6 religious education lesson, where pupils were packing their 'suitcase for life'. Using some powerful metaphors, pupils were able to understand and discuss the concept of goodness as well as developing some pity writing. The school's most recent assessment data confirms that pupils are making good progress in reading.
- Pupils are proud ambassadors for their school. They thoroughly enjoy school life together. In lessons, pupils sustain good concentration and try hard with their work. They are eager to demonstrate what they have learned. Around the school and at breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils are calm and orderly. They are considerate of each other. Pupils respect the school environment and treat each other with notable respect, care and kindness.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to improve the teaching of problem solving and reasoning skills in mathematics for all pupils
- teachers consistently provide challenging work for the middle prior attaining pupils throughout the school.

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 East Riding of Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jen Cave  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and four members of the governing body and a group of pupils. I had a meeting with the safeguarding team, including the special educational needs coordinator. I conducted a joint work scrutiny with subject leaders in English and mathematics. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school and during lessons. I met a number of parents informally at the beginning of the school day. I considered the views of 31 parents through Parent View (Ofsted's online survey) and in person.

There were no responses to the staff or pupil surveys. I evaluated a range of documents including safeguarding records, the school's self-evaluation and policies.