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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Helen Jameson
Acting Headteacher
Kilham Church of England Voluntary Controlled School
Millside
Kilham
Driffield
YO25 4SR

Dear Mrs Jameson

Short inspection of Kilham Church of England Voluntary Controlled School

Following my visit to the school on 12 December 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 March 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

As acting headteacher, you are leading the school with commitment and determination. In the short time you have been in post, you have gained the support of staff, pupils, parents and carers. Together with the staff and governors, you have ensured that the school continues to be a warm and welcoming school that serves the local community well.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. They behave exceptionally well in class and around school and want to make progress. Pupils are polite and friendly towards one another and have very positive relationships with their teachers. They strive to be 'caring, friendly and learn well', in line with the school's values. Pupils are enthusiastic about the many musical and sports-based opportunities that are offered by the school. For example, pupils enthusiastically told me about learning the haka as part of their physical education lessons. Parents are very supportive of the school and the work of you and your team. Almost every parent who shared their view using the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, would recommend the school to others. As one parent told me, 'This is a fantastic school. We couldn't ask for better.' Another commented, 'I wouldn't want my child to go anywhere else. It's a truly special school.'

Staff recognise that you have ensured consistency for the school. All of the staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire strongly agreed that the school is well led

and managed. You have developed a learning culture among staff. They are eager to reflect on how well their teaching improves pupils' learning so that they can contribute to the school's journey of improvement at the heart of the local community.

Following your appointment in September 2018, you ensured that you quickly understood the school very well. Your self-evaluation accurately identifies the school's strengths and points out where improvements are needed. For example, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has been below average for the last three years. This is a current priority. Individual action plans point to the next steps and the targets that you are working towards. You have worked well with the headteacher designate to try to ensure that he knows the school well and that the pace of improvement you have established will continue on his appointment in January 2019.

By the end of key stage 2, pupils are making good progress in writing and mathematics. However, the progress made by middle-attaining pupils from their individual starting points in reading has not been as strong as it could be. Consequently, in 2018, standards in reading were below average. By the end of key stage 1, standards in reading have been below average for the last two years.

When inspectors visited the school in 2015, leaders were asked to improve teaching by sharing the good practice within the school to develop teachers' skills further. There is a great sense of teamwork and teachers enjoy the opportunities they have to share their expertise and learn from each other.

Leaders were also asked to raise pupils' progress and attainment in writing across the school. Pupils are given opportunities to write for a variety of purposes in a range of subjects. The focus on improving writing has been successful. As a result of the school's determined focus on improving the teaching of phonics, the proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the phonics screening check standard has improved and, in 2018, was in line with the national average. The English leader is knowledgeable about pupils' progress and teaching across the school. As part of her work, she makes regular checks on the quality of work in pupils' books and by visiting classrooms.

Governors have a range of skills and all are committed to the school. They have a clear understanding of the school's position and receive useful and timely information to allow them to carry out their roles. Governors regularly visit the school. Each governor has an area of responsibility and regularly evaluates the effectiveness of that area alongside leaders and teachers.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils' safety is a priority for the school. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All staff are provided with safeguarding training when they join the school, and this is updated annually. Staff are kept up to date with any changes as they occur. Leaders ensure that all the appropriate pre-employment checks are carried out on staff and volunteers. Staff know their pupils

well. Any concerns are reported, considered carefully and prompt action is taken. Case files are detailed and well organised.

Pupils spoke confidently about the ways in which staff work hard to keep them safe and look after them. They say that they feel safe in school and staff agree. Pupils know who to go to if they have a concern and they feel supported by the ways in which issues are resolved. Pupils know how to keep safe on the internet and the reasons for doing so.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I focused on three lines of enquiry. The first of these looked at how effectively leaders are improving pupils' progress and attainment in reading across the school. This is because, in 2018, middle-attaining pupils made weaker progress by the end of key stage 2 from their individual starting points than in writing and mathematics. As a result, standards in reading were below average. Furthermore, by the end of key stage 1, standards in reading have been below average for the last two years.
- Pupils read accurately and fluently. Pupils told me about their favourite authors, such as Jeff Kinney and JK Rowling. They appreciate the variety of books on offer in the school's library and in the newly established reading areas in classrooms. Phonics is taught well and, by the end of key stage 1, almost all pupils are able to use their phonics knowledge to decode unfamiliar words.
- You are trialling a new approach to the way reading comprehension is taught across the school. Whole-class 'book-talk' sessions take place each day. In a Year 2 lesson I visited, pupils enjoyed reading a challenging text and used this to answer a range of questions which developed their reading skills well. These pupils confidently explained to their teacher why the author had used the phrase 'blissfully unaware' to describe the main character. In other classes, pupils are not always given work that challenges them enough or expects them to use a range of more complex reading skills.
- My second key line of enquiry considered how well leaders ensure that children make a good start to school in the early years. Over recent years, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has been a little below the national average. In 2018, it was much lower. This is because a smaller proportion of children reached the expected standard in writing.
- Children in early years work harmoniously together. Children regularly learn and practise reading phonics sounds to support their early reading and writing. We observed children working outside writing an advert independently to 'sell their bicycles'. We also observed the teacher encouraging children to write sentences using 'tricky words'. However, children could be offered further learning activities indoors and outdoors to apply their phonics knowledge to develop their writing skills. Teachers have recognised the need to develop children's skills in writing, and recent links with a local school and the local authority are supporting them in planning further to address this priority.

- My final line of enquiry concerned the progress of disadvantaged pupils by the end of key stage 2. This is because, over the last two years, disadvantaged pupils' progress has been lower than that of both other pupils in the school and others nationally. Since your appointment, you have worked with the school's pupil premium champion to put together a detailed plan for the use of the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders and teachers know these pupils very well and identify the correct actions to target their individual needs. Inspection evidence shows that disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making good progress. Previous differences in their achievement compared to others in the school are diminishing.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of reading more consistently develops pupils' comprehension skills and improves their progress
- children in the early years have wider opportunities to develop and apply their writing skills so that more reach or exceed the standard expected for their age.

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

Mark Randall
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met regularly with you and your English leader. I also met with four staff members, two members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I reviewed documentation, including information about pupils' achievement, the school's view of its own performance, the school improvement plan and safeguarding checks and procedures. Together, we visited classes across the school. In lessons, I observed pupils learning, looked at their books, heard them read and spoke to them about their work. I met informally with pupils to gather their views of the school. I took into account the views of parents I met on the playground. I also considered 29 responses to Parent View, including 25 free-text responses. I took account of 16 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.