

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Martyn Wells
Headteacher
The Claypole Church of England Primary School
School Lane
Claypole
Newark
Nottinghamshire
NG23 5BQ

Dear Mr Wells

Short inspection of The Claypole Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 March 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 January 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have created a culture of high expectations and have not shirked the tough decisions required in order to make sure that pupils make the progress that they should. There has been much change within a relatively short period of time. Some of this change was of initial concern to some parents and carers. You and the governing body have worked hard to improve communication in order to address these concerns. It is clear that you have been successful in this. The vast majority of those parents spoken with and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire indicated their support for the school. Many parents said that their children were excited to come to school, were well supported by their teachers and were making progress as a result. One parent commented that, 'this is a lovely, well-run school'. In spite of such success, there remain a small number of parents who would like communication to be further improved.

Leaders and teachers take a great deal of care to promote a genuine Christian ethos and also ensure that pupils learn in a stimulating and safe environment. Leaders and teachers waste no opportunity to inform pupils, display their achievements and challenge their thinking. Routines are well established and pupils move quickly and calmly to their learning and to their play.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent; they listen to the instructions of their teacher and settle well to the tasks they are set. Many pupils were keen to say 'hello' to the inspector and to check whether any assistance was required. Many were keen to discuss their school and the value that they placed on their teachers.

You recognise the importance of making sure that robust systems are in place to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment within each class. This was an issue identified for further development at the previous inspection. You have quickly put in place systems to regularly check teaching quality. Performance management arrangements are more sharply focused on school development priorities. There are regular opportunities for teachers to be involved in professional development, including weekly staff meetings. The governing body also plays an active role in monitoring aspects of the school. It is clear that, in some classes, pupils make good and even accelerated progress. However, this is not the case in all classes, particularly in key stage 2. You acknowledge this and have rapidly responded to tackle the issues.

You accept that at key stage 2, middle-ability pupils, including middle-ability disadvantaged pupils, do not achieve as their starting points indicate. In 2016, these pupils did not make the progress of which they were capable in reading, writing and mathematics. The attainment of middle-ability pupils in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was below the national average. You and the deputy headteacher have been proactive in addressing this. The whole-school assessment system now focuses on pupils' progress and regular checks take place to make sure that pupils who may be at risk of falling behind receive the help they need in order to catch up. The most recent assessment information indicates that the progress of these pupils is rapidly improving. You recognise that this group of pupils is capable of making even better progress, particularly in mathematics, and have identified this as a high priority issue to address.

Together with the deputy headteacher, we conducted a scrutiny of current key stage 2 pupils' books. Many pupils are attaining at least at the levels expected for their age within the subjects that they study. In some classes, it was clear that pupils were making accelerated progress, for example in Year 4 science. We agreed that in some classes, pupils' progress in mathematics is not rapid because they do not have enough opportunities to reason mathematically, apply what they know and to explain why an answer is correct or not. This was particularly evident for middle-ability pupils.

In 2016, disadvantaged pupils failed to achieve as well as others in the school at the end of key stage 2. Leaders and governors recognise that due to the small number of disadvantaged pupils, an individualised approach to the spending of pupil premium funding must be taken. Current information indicates that increased numbers of disadvantaged pupils are attaining as they should at key stage 2. However, some middle-ability disadvantaged pupils are capable of making better progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

You place high a high priority on making sure that pupils feel safe. Fundamental to this is to create a caring school within a Christian context. Pupils frequently use the 'Prayer Tree' to express their concerns, hopes and wishes. They said that they felt safe. Pupils told the inspector that there were 'loads of adults' within school that they could trust. They added that they were 'surrounded by friends who care for us'.

The governor with responsibility for safeguarding provides good support to the school. Appropriate risk assessments are in place and regular checks happen to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils.

There is an efficient system to address any urgent matters that arise. Records are precise and are diligently kept by leaders. You have made sure that the staff understand their duty to report any concerns. Pupils told the inspector that if they had a problem within school, they would have someone to speak to whom they 'knew would help.'

Pupils learn many ways in which to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils learn about first aid, they learn how to ride their bikes safely on the roads and how to protect themselves when using a computer or mobile phone.

The behaviour policy is effective. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Bullying is rare and pupils were quick to inform the inspector that if any issues did arise, their teachers would be quick to resolve them.

Inspection findings

- Leaders, including the governing body, have successfully managed a period of turmoil and change. You have identified that continuing good communication with parents is a priority.
- Leaders, including the members of the governing body, have correctly identified the strengths of the school and the areas that require further development. Appropriate plans are in place and suitable actions taken to ensure that the school continues to be a good school. The deputy headteacher is effective within the role and has had significant impact.
- Governors are highly skilled and provide good support. They have good financial oversight and recognise that they need to challenge leaders further to ensure that the pupil premium has the maximum impact for eligible pupils.
- In 2016, a number of pupils failed to attend school regularly. The low pupil numbers in school mean that attendance information requires careful scrutiny. Current attendance information indicates that all pupils are attending school more regularly. You have set the ambition to ensure that pupils' attendance is consistently at or above the national average.

- Although improving, middle-ability pupils, including disadvantaged middle-ability pupils, do not make the progress of which they are capable by the end of key stage 2, particularly in mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- middle-ability pupils, including middle-ability disadvantaged pupils, make the progress that they should by the end of key stage 2, particularly within mathematics
- pupils' attendance is consistently at or above national levels
- pupil premium funding is effective in addressing the barriers to learning for eligible pupils
- leaders continue to improve communication with parents, carers and the local community.

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

Jayne Ashman
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we met, discussed and then agreed the lines of enquiry. I met with all staff during the morning briefing meeting. I spoke with 12 parents at the start of the school day and considered the views of a further 39 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I viewed a range of documents, including an evaluation of the school's performance, information regarding pupils' achievement and attendance, and a number of school policies. I reviewed the pupils' safeguarding and welfare arrangements and documentation. Together, you, the deputy headteacher and I reviewed a sample of the work of key stage 2 pupils. I met formally with a group of key stage 2 pupils from classes 4, 5 and 6. I met with the chair of the governing body and two other members of the governing body.