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Mrs Emma Hardy
Executive Headteacher
Ecclesall Church of England Junior School
Ringinglow Road
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
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Dear Mrs Hardy

Short inspection of Ecclesall Church of England Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 15 March 2016, 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 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment as executive headteacher, you and your highly effective team of governors have further developed senior leadership as a key strength of the school. New appointments to the senior leadership team have enhanced leaders' capacity to continue to drive improvement. Staff recognise the progress that has been made and are fully on board.

The recent federation with a local infant school is already having a positive impact on transition arrangements for the majority of your pupils. It is enabling teachers from both schools to work closely together to track progress, moderate judgements and share good practice.

Your self-assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate. Your school development plan is precise in targeting key areas for improvement. This is because you and your leadership team understand what you need to do to become an outstanding school.

Teachers work together to plan exciting and interesting lessons which motivate pupils to work hard and try their best. As a result, pupils are keen to learn, behave well and show positive attitudes to learning. Pupils take pride in their work and presentation is of a high standard. Outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for secondary school.

Leaders are developing strong links with other local schools, which are helping them to compare standards and recognise any gaps in their own work. This is helping to further strengthen self-analysis and raise expectations.

Safeguarding is effective.

You frequently check safeguarding practice to ensure that all legal requirements are fulfilled. Records are updated regularly and there are strong systems in place to keep all information up to date. Regular training for all staff is documented and staff know what to do if they have any concerns.

Inspection findings

- The quality of teaching and learning is regularly checked by leaders and you have an accurate picture of where key strengths lie. The information you gather from observations of teaching and the scrutiny of pupils' work is used to inform further improvements. For example, training for teachers has extended their skills in using probing questioning to deepen pupils' thinking.
- In mathematics lessons, pupils are applying their mathematical knowledge to solve problems. Well-planned activities extend the learning of pupils of all abilities. Pupils are highly motivated by the interesting tasks set. Teachers regularly share key learning points, which helps pupils to consolidate their knowledge and understanding. The most-able pupils have time to move onto more challenging tasks, while teachers give more support to the rest of the pupils. Occasionally there are less opportunities for the most-able to be appropriately challenged.
- In a writing session, pupils were using silent movies and stills as a stimulus for writing. Pupils were fully engaged and interested in their learning because teachers had planned thoughtful activities. Teachers skilfully moved pupils on to improve their own sentences. Standards in writing show that teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do.
- Leaders have carefully looked at the reasons why there was a dip in the progress in mathematics in 2015 and have ensured that training for teachers has strengthened their practice to benefit pupils' learning.
- Currently the majority of pupils are making good progress. Teachers have a shared understanding of the new curriculum expectations. Work with other school leaders has strengthened the assessment process, ensuring that there is common understanding across the local partnership. The assessment system remains in its early stages and will require further time and development to be further embedded.

- Pupils cover a range of interesting topics and enjoy a variety of visits and visitors. Parents are encouraged to come into school to talk to pupils and share their skills and interests. Topic work is of high quality and covers the full range of subjects. Work in religious education is particularly strong. Pupils' achievements in physical education are celebrated regularly.
- Innovative leaders have developed their own trackers to check how well individual pupils are developing their grammar and comprehension. Assessments are checked regularly to ensure that any emerging gaps are addressed at joint planning meetings. This is just one example of the ways in which leaders are always seeking to improve outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils behave well in class. They are interested in what they are learning because teachers plan activities that engage and challenge them. Most parents consider that if there were any incidents of poor behaviour, staff would deal with them quickly and fairly.
- The majority of parents agree that children are safe and are well looked after. Most parents would recommend the school. There were a few negative comments received via parents' texts; however, the majority of parents were extremely positive and praised the school highly. These positive views were endorsed by parents who spoke to inspectors.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- new assessment and tracking systems are further developed so that information can be used to swiftly identify and support the progress of individuals and groups
- teachers have every opportunity to model and share best practice across the school to ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across year groups.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Sheffield and the Director of Children's Services for Sheffield City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Janet Lunn
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection I met with you, your head of school, both assistant headteachers, governors and a representative from the local authority. I visited several classrooms with you or your head of school to observe teaching and learning and to talk to pupils. I looked at samples of the work produced by your pupils and spoke to some parents in the playground. I reviewed the information from Parent View, read the 58 text responses and one letter delivered by hand. I took note of the 19 responses to the staff questionnaire. I analysed school documentation both on your website and that requested prior to the inspection.