

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



7 March 2018

Mr Tom Emery
Headteacher
The Holbeach William Stukeley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Spalding Road
Holbeach
Spalding
Lincolnshire
PE12 7HG

Dear Mr Emery

Short inspection of The Holbeach William Stukeley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 February 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 June 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

Your ethos of developing pupils' life skills, such as resilience, independence and the ability to hold a conversation, sits alongside the importance of academic achievement.

You and your staff provide pupils with a wide range of experiences to make learning exciting and meaningful to them. Pupils' books and attractive displays around school show that they learn about a wide range of subjects. They study the work of famous artists such as Mondrian and they practise their own printing skills, producing very pleasing results. Pupils learn about different countries and flags and study inspirational people of the past, such as Florence Nightingale. They can learn to play musical instruments, take part in performances and share their work with parents and carers during special assemblies.

For at least two terms every year, on Friday afternoons, pupils attend 'William Stukeley University'. During this time, pupils attend the seminar of their choice from a selection prepared by staff. Importantly, seminars are linked with the world of work in order to inspire pupils and to prepare them well for their future. Equine studies, flower arranging and seminars delivered by local police officers and magistrates are among the popular choices on offer.

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to make sure that teachers understand the school's assessment information and provide pupils with work that challenges them. Since that time, you have introduced a new process for assessing pupils' skills and understanding and tracking the progress they make. Staff and governors have received training so that they understand the system. You and your staff use the system when you make regular checks on the progress pupils are making. You are currently developing this further by collating a selection of pupils' writing for teachers to refer to when they make their assessments. This is not complete and the process for using this system of moderation has not been formalised. In class, we saw that teachers provide work for pupils that is well matched to what they know and can do. In mathematics, for example, teachers provide pupils with different levels of challenge to choose from, according to their skills and understanding. Teachers move pupils on when they are ready to try something that will prove to be more difficult.

The majority of parents who responded to the online survey and who spoke with me during the inspection speak highly of the school. They know that their children are safe and feel they can speak to you if they have any concerns.

Pupils told me that they are proud to attend the school. Around school and in lessons, pupils respond well to instructions from adults. They are polite and keen to talk about their school to visitors. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to take responsibility around school. They set up assembly, act as house captains and help adults at lunchtime, for example. They recognise that these tasks and the responsibility they bring are helping to prepare them for life beyond primary school.

Governors know the school well. They visit the school, speak with pupils and look at books, for example, to see the school's work in action for themselves. They offer both support and effective challenge to school leaders.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is a high priority at the school. You have made sure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You ensure that all the appropriate checks take place before adults work or volunteer in school. Staff receive training and know how to raise a concern about a pupil's welfare should one arise. Records are well kept. You devote the first half of every staff meeting to safeguarding matters. All staff can attend, keeping this important aspect of your work at the front of everyone's minds.

Pupils say that bullying is very rare. One pupil told me, 'The teachers won't allow it!' They are confident that, if it should occur, an adult would deal with it for them. Pupils told me that they are safe in school. Older pupils appreciate that regular fire drills enable staff to know how to keep them safe in the unlikely event of an emergency. Pupils speak knowledgeably about how to keep themselves safe when they use modern technology. They learn about aspects of safety, such as cycling safely on the roads. Pupils can represent their peers as junior road safety officers or junior police cadet officers. These pupils present important information during

assembly and run competitions to raise awareness of safety within the whole-school community.

Inspection findings

- Pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics by the end of key stage 2. In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving both the expected standard and a greater depth of understanding in each of these subjects was higher than the national figure. Additionally, pupils made progress that was at least in line with their peers nationally. You and your leaders have rightly recognised, however, that pupils have not been making as much progress in writing across key stage 2 as they do in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers now make sure that pupils use the skills they have learned in spelling, punctuation and grammar when they write at length across a range of subjects. They provide pupils with guidance and time to improve their writing in lessons. Pupils' books show that they are making strong progress from their starting points this year, writing increasingly complex sentences.
- You and your staff check with each other to confirm that your assessments of pupils' writing are consistent. You have also implemented strategies such as checking closely that pupils understand what is expected in their writing and ensuring that teachers show pupils examples of high-quality writing. You have not, however, evaluated precisely enough the impact of the initiatives, nor have you formalised the process to check the accuracy of assessments. This means that you do not have all the information you need to be able to take swifter action in accelerating the progress that pupils make.
- Despite this, there are early signs of success. The proportion of pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, achieving the expected standard in writing at the end of key stage 2 rose from 2016 to 2017. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected and higher standards in spelling, punctuation and grammar rose from 2016 to 2017, so that they are now above those seen nationally.
- When you and your leaders identified that boys did not always achieve as well as girls, you acted to rectify the situation. Throughout the school, teachers provide opportunities for learning that will interest both boys and girls. Pupils in key stage one, for example, write stories based on the superhero, Superman, and trips to local Royal Air Force bases are commonplace. By the end of 2017, the proportion of boys achieving the expected standards at the end of key stages 1 and 2 had risen in each subject. By the end of Year 6, boys made better progress than girls in reading and mathematics.
- Children start school in the Reception class with skills that are often lower, and sometimes much lower, than would be expected of their age. An increasing proportion of children who speak English as an additional language attend the early years. You and the leader with responsibility for the early years have increased the number of staff who work with children in the early years so that children can receive additional adult intervention to promote their learning. During our visit to the early years classes, we saw staff expertly encouraging

children to develop their skills. Teachers provide an appropriate selection of resources to help children understand the concepts being taught. In mathematics, for example, children were using equipment to help them with subtraction and to develop their understanding of numbers above 20. School assessment information shows that children make strong progress from their different starting points.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they accelerate the progress that pupils make in writing across key stage 2 by:
 - evaluating more precisely the strategies they implement so that they focus their efforts on those that are most successful
 - formalising the process for checking the accuracy of the assessments teachers make of pupils' writing and using the information this provides to greater effect.

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

Di Mullan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection, I met with you and six other school leaders. I met with three governors and a representative of the local authority. I spoke informally with pupils in class as we toured the school together to see the learning that was taking place in every year group. I met more formally with a group of nine pupils and spoke with parents on the playground before and after school. I paid a short visit to the school's breakfast club.

Together we scrutinised a range of pupils' books. I examined a range of school documentation, including the self-evaluation document, the school improvement plan and documentation relating to safeguarding.

I considered the views of parents through the 37 responses to the online survey, Parent View. I also reviewed the 22 responses to the staff online survey and the 36 responses to the pupils' online survey.