

28 February 2019

Mrs Joanne Everitt
Headteacher
The Humberston Church of England Primary School
Church Lane
Humberston
Grimsby
North East Lincolnshire
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Dear Mrs Everitt

Short inspection of The Humberston Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 2019, 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 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school provides pupils with every opportunity for them to grow in their personal development. Pupils have a secure grounding in their basic skills in literacy and numeracy and value learning. They are well prepared for secondary school. Pupils are a credit to the school and their parents and carers. They try hard in lessons and participate in the many clubs and activities you offer to broaden their horizons. You and your leaders identify precisely the most urgent priorities to improve provision to benefit pupils so that they achieve as well as they can. Staff morale is high; staff appreciate all that you do to safeguard their well-being when delegating responsibilities. Your aspirations to do the best for pupils are evident in the way leaders carry out their roles to improve teaching and learning. You have successfully built capacity within the school to support sustainable improvement to benefit pupils.

Outcomes in writing continue to be very strong. While pupils' outcomes in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2018 were not as high as in writing, actions to remedy this are having impact. Pupils are making good progress this year and more are working towards the higher standard in these subjects. Leaders, including governors, have the skills and expertise to improve the school further. With effective support and challenge from the governors and strong commitment from staff, the school's overall effectiveness is improving rapidly.

The school is a calm but productive environment, with bright displays that celebrate pupils' hard efforts. Pupils feel safe and happy, knowing that staff are there to help them. Pupils say that teachers plan activities to make learning interesting. A few did say

that they do not always understand what they have to do to achieve well, but that teachers help them if they get stuck. Pupils explained that often they choose topics to study and this makes learning more meaningful. They enjoy many enrichment opportunities, for example sports clubs and provision for music. All pupils learn to play the violin in key stage 2. Pupils organise fundraising events that deepen their awareness of responsibility to others as they grow as citizens. Older pupils help younger ones at lunchtimes. Playground buddies make sure that less self-assured pupils have friends to play with and that everyone plays sensibly and safely.

You have high expectations of all staff and ensure that they have access to the support and training they need to improve their practice. Staff know the school's improvement plans and their roles to realise these. Middle leaders support you in monitoring teaching and learning effectively and to address the key issues identified in the previous inspection report. These issues were to improve teaching generally and to make sure that pupils know how to improve their work. Teaching over time is good, but there are occasions where pupils could be challenged further. In mathematics, for example, pupils occasionally fail to apply their previous learning systematically and logically when tackling multi-step problems requiring a range of operations. Also, they do not always set calculations out correctly and so make careless errors. When teachers spot such lapses, they address them promptly, but among some less confident learners, this slows their progress. Similarly, while phonics is taught well from the early years onwards, a few pupils do not apply what they know fluently or confidently when they encounter unfamiliar vocabulary. Some admit that they find reading difficult and so choose not to read sufficiently. The teaching of writing remains strong. Teachers inspire pupils to explore vocabulary to make their writing lively and engaging by reading with pupils regularly. Pupils write with accuracy and eloquence in historical accounts or scientific reports. Since 2015, outcomes overall have improved, but inconsistencies across subjects still remain. In 2018, while pupils' outcomes in writing were above average, they were broadly average in reading and mathematics.

Pupils enjoy learning and want to do well. They talk enthusiastically about writing poems and narrative pieces, for example about the stresses of the Great War and injustices in society. They consider what the planet may have been like when dinosaurs roamed the earth or the redeeming features of Antarctica as a habitat for penguins. Pupils investigate rainforests with passion as they explore the 'kaleidoscope' of wildlife that mankind needs to protect and preserve. Although much of the teaching does provide challenge, the most able pupils are capable of achieving more. Occasionally, pupils of all abilities start with the same tasks, and while some move quickly to tackle 'challenges', others do not.

Parents are mostly very positive about the school. Most say that their children are happy and feel safe here. Pupils behave well and work hard because they enjoy learning. Their attendance is above the national average because they want to be in school. Most of the parents say that their children make good progress and teaching is good.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders take their duty-of-care responsibilities seriously. Staff and governors understand the school's procedures for first-aid training, risk assessments, site security and supervision of pupils in all circumstances. Safeguarding procedures are reviewed and

revised regularly to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Safeguarding training for staff and governors is up to date. Senior leaders check that all staff are cleared to work with pupils and that all pre-employment checks are thorough. All know to follow the agreed procedures systematically and to act promptly if any concerns arise. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe at all times in school and outside. They know the dangers posed by, for example, posting personal information on the internet that 'strangers or bad people could use to hurt you, especially if you go on various social media sites'. Pupils know how to stay on the roads, what to do in a fire and how to stay safe generally.

Pupils know how to recognise bullying and to tell parents or teachers if they are worried or upset. As some explained to me, 'Bullying is cruel and unkind. You shouldn't bully and if you get bullied, always tell someone.' Pupils say that bullying does not happen at school and if it did, teachers would deal with it straightaway. Pupils are very kind and supportive of each other at all times. Staff know that some pupils experience particularly difficult issues in their lives. They support these pupils' social and emotional needs very sensitively. You ensure that you involve other agencies, where necessary, to support vulnerable pupils and their families to safeguard their well-being and welfare.

Inspection findings

- While pupils continue to leave the school at the end of Year 6 at or above the standard expected for their age, there are some inconsistencies from year to year. The school's overall data for the results of tests and assessment in 2018 was positive but a few pupils did not make the progress they should have in reading and mathematics. I examined whether all pupils have the support they need to make good progress throughout.
- Inspection evidence shows that most pupils are making good progress. Pupils' workbooks reflect strong progress in writing, not just in English but in other subjects too. Pupils are confident writers on the whole, and where punctuation, spelling and grammar errors occur, pupils are reminded to correct these in subsequent work. Pupils are making good progress in mathematics because teachers note quickly where individuals need help to understand complex tasks that require pupils to think through problem solving systematically. Pupils' progress in reading is more variable, particularly among less confident readers, who sometimes falter when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary or in explaining what they have read. Leaders at all levels are involved in reviewing each pupil's progress closely. Teachers and teaching assistants modify provision to plan for individual pupils' needs effectively. While most teachers challenge pupils well, occasionally expectations are not high enough to encourage pupils to apply previous learning confidently and to move on to harder tasks more quickly.
- With some inconsistencies in the progress of different groups in 2018, particularly among lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), I looked at the effectiveness of provision for these pupils. Some of these pupils did not make the progress expected of them in 2018. Leaders are very quick to identify any pupil at risk of falling behind in their learning and modify provision to meet their individual needs. Any concerns regarding pupils' progress and well-being are high priority and leaders involve parents in decisions that impact on their children. Leaders involve other agencies where necessary to add their support and expertise. Most of these more vulnerable pupils make good progress.

- As pupils' outcomes in writing have been notably higher than in reading and mathematics in the last two years, I wanted to check whether teacher assessments in writing are accurate. From work in pupils' books, the teaching of writing is a strength in the school. The samples of work seen, particularly from key stage 2 pupils, show that pupils have made good progress from September 2018 to now. Some of the work of the most able Year 3 and Year 6 pupils was of very high quality for their age and shows that writing skills are developed very effectively. Teachers' assessments are accurate and reliable and pupils' books show that pupils enjoy writing and most do so accurately. Given that this is the case, it is hard to explain why the teachers' assessments in reading and mathematics were not wholly realised in national tests and assessments for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2018. Leaders check teachers' assessments rigorously. The underperformance of a few pupils last year in reading and mathematics was mainly due to pupils' individual circumstances at the time of the tests.
- Finally, I examined the slight inconsistencies in the results of tests and assessments between the performance of boys and girls in 2018, in reading, writing and mathematics combined. Girls outperformed boys both at the expected and the higher standard. However, the progress of boys across key stage 2 overall was stronger than that of the girls because boys' starting points had been lower. Evidence for current pupils in the school does not reflect any significant variation from that found nationally between boys and girls. Variations from year to year do occur, mainly relating to the profiles of each cohort and the proportion of boys to girls in specific year groups.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching challenges pupils sufficiently in all subjects and throughout all key stages
- all pupils, but especially less confident readers, read sufficiently and apply their early reading skills with greater confidence when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary
- pupils have the skills and confidence to articulate their views about the texts they read
- pupils think logically and systematically when solving multi-step problems that require more than one or two operations and they set their work out to minimise careless errors
- teachers have higher expectations of all pupils but particularly the most able and encourage them to progress to harder tasks more quickly when working independently.

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 North East Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and all your staff, the chair of the governing body and one other governor. I met with a representative from the local authority and the diocese, and with your middle leaders and other staff with specific responsibilities. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and I examined the evidence therein. I reviewed documentation relating to pupils' achievement, the school development plan, safeguarding checks and policies and procedures. I observed pupils around the school, including in the playground and in classes. Together with you and your head of school, I visited all classes and discussed these observations with you both. I looked at many pupils' books, spoke to several pupils about their work and listened to some of them read. I spoke with a few parents at the start of the day to seek their views about the school. I also took into account the 61 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the school's own survey of parents' views from earlier this year, and the 62 free-text messages submitted by parents to Ofsted. I also considered the 21 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. No pupils submitted the Ofsted online questionnaire for pupils.