

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mr David Moorfoot  
Headteacher  
St Mary's Church of England Aided Primary School, Long Newton  
The Green  
Long Newton  
Stockton-on-Tees  
TS21 1DL

Dear Mr David Moorfoot

### **Short inspection of St Mary's Church of England Aided Primary School, Long Newton**

Following my visit to the school on 12 January 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 established a strong ethos of mutual respect, kindness and understanding, while at the same time encouraging high standards of behaviour and academic progress. Children value the quality of teaching and the care and support they receive from their teachers. Parents are effusive in their praise of this 'lovely school' where their children are happy and confident, and where 'the head teacher and staff go above and beyond for the children'. These high levels of care, combined with clear leadership and good teaching, enable pupils to make good progress and achieve extremely high outcomes.

You and your teachers have responded robustly to the heightened demands of the new national curriculum and assessment tasks. Through strong planning and effective teaching, pupils have clear opportunities to work at greater depths in reading, mathematics and writing. As a result, in 2016 pupils made outstanding progress and achieved outcomes that were well above those seen nationally. You have ensured that this success was sustained as high standards were achieved at both key stage 1 and 2 and in wider curriculum subjects, such as science.

You and your team are committed to promoting the development of pupils, and the school's clear Christian values add to a moral purpose that permeates all aspects of the school's work. The rigour of the ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum is enriched by wider experiences and learning opportunities. Pupils value the extensive

opportunities to participate in a range of sports, including cricket, hockey, gymnastics and street dance. Pupils are actively encouraged to learn a musical instrument, and on the day of inspection a large number of children from a range of year groups stayed on at school to sing in the choir. Parents value the wider experiences provided for their children and can see how this adds to their self-esteem and confidence. You, your pupils and their parents are rightly proud of the place of the school at the centre of the community.

You are beginning to extend your own strong leadership to other members of staff. Your new leadership team has specific responsibility for managing key areas, such as the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Your new early years leaders are bringing fresh ideas to planning and the use of space, although outcomes in this phase remain below those seen elsewhere in the school. Wider groups of teachers are becoming involved in processes that track pupils' progress, and this is contributing to the high standards evident across the school. However, there remains a need to further sustain long-term improvement by extending leadership responsibilities to a wider range of teachers to lead teaching developments, monitor standards and become more deeply involved in professional development activities.

Governors are committed to the ongoing success of the school. The chair provides effective leadership and oversees relevant committee structures. Governors have become more assiduous in tracking pupils' progress, and review teacher performance and pay progression with increasing rigour. The chair of governors has additional safeguarding oversight, and appropriate governors are trained in safer recruitment practices. Governors have the skills and expertise to hold leaders to account, although not all governors are able to fulfil their roles as class and subject links as closely as others.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The headteacher and his team are extremely mindful of pupils' welfare and safety, and take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. Rigorous checks are made on the suitability of adults working at the school. Staff receive up-to-date training on key safeguarding issues. Pupils feel safe and very well supported in school, and their parents agree. The calm and orderly atmosphere cultivated by teachers, and the ethos of mutual respect, supports pupils in feeling safe and secure. In conversation, pupils said that bullying did not happen at school, and if it did they were confident that teachers would act decisively to address this. Pupils were able to discuss the actions they could take to remain safe, for example the actions needed to stay safe online.

### **Inspection findings**

- You and your team have maintained a culture of high expectation and built increasing rigour into teaching, learning and assessment that has enabled pupils to respond well to more challenging curriculum demands. In the 2016 national tests at key stage 1 and 2, pupils achieved outstanding outcomes, with pupils achieving levels of attainment and progress that were well above those seen

nationally. Pupils' progress in reading and mathematics was particularly strong.

- Teaching is consistently good across the curriculum. Teachers demonstrate considerable subject expertise, and use questions to effectively probe and deepen understanding. They engender effective learning behaviours in pupils who can sustain concentration during extended writing, and have the confidence to participate actively in group tasks and shared reading activities.
- Teachers effectively develop pupils' reading skills and achieve outcomes in the phonics screening check that are in line with those seen nationally. Pupils' reading skills develop strongly as they progress through the school, enabling them to read a wide range of texts with perceptive understanding.
- Pupils develop strong writing skills and demonstrate accomplished writing in their books over time. They structure writing effectively, and have an extremely good understanding of grammatical features and how to use them to suit the stylistic requirements of particular types of writing. Pupils discuss grammatical features and literary terms with considerable insight. They demonstrated pride in their writing and were comfortable writing at length.
- Pupils achieve extremely strong outcomes in mathematics as a result of thorough planning and effective teaching. Work in books revealed that pupils regularly show confidence in their arithmetic skills and in deploying a range of computational methods. Pupils explore demanding mathematics problems, and consolidate and deepen their mathematical understanding and reasoning.
- As a result of more imaginative planning and teaching, children in the early years are beginning to make improving levels of progress. The learning environment is now used more effectively, and teachers are deploying resources to develop children's skills and understanding. Although improving, overall children's outcomes remain below those seen at other phases.
- Teachers track pupils' progress through regular assessment and provide high-quality written and verbal feedback in line with the school's policy that supports pupils in making good progress.
- Pupils show considerable pride in their work. Work is extremely well presented and this extends to science, topic and religious education books, where pupils continue to make extremely good progress.
- Pupils are extremely well behaved and demonstrate high levels of respect towards one another and adults. They conduct themselves in a friendly and orderly manner around the site. Relationships are strong as pupils know that teachers have their interests at heart. Pupils are positive learners, sharing and discussing their work with one another, and focusing attentively when required. Rates of attendance are high, as pupils value their learning.
- Leaders effectively address the need of differing groups of pupils. Leaders have close understanding of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who made strong progress in reading and mathematics in 2016. Through challenging teaching and a robust curriculum, the most able pupils consistently achieve standards above those seen nationally. The small proportion of disadvantaged pupils are tracked carefully, and typically make good progress

across a range of subjects.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- build robustly upon recent improvements to teaching and wider provision in the early years to enable children to make stronger progress
- sustain long-term improvement by building leadership capacity across the school, and giving teachers increasing responsibility for monitoring standards and sharing good practice.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Durham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Stockton-on-Tees. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Kirtley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and a wider group of teachers and teaching assistants. I also spoke to two members of the governing body, including the chair. I held a meeting with a group of pupils and talked to pupils less formally in lessons. I also talked to the school improvement partner from the local authority. I undertook a learning walk with you, and carried out my own additional observations. I also looked at pupils' work in books and folders. I examined the school improvement plan as well as other documents, including the school's self-evaluation, assessment information, behaviour and attendance information and pupil tracking. I examined safeguarding documents, including the single central record. I took into account 39 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and 30 free-text responses.