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Mrs Lorraine Ellis
Headteacher
Coppull St John's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
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Dear Mrs Ellis

Short inspection of Coppull St John's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 December 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 September 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. This school is a happy school which sits at the heart of the parish community. Leaders and governors are well respected by parents and pupils. Parents are happy to send their children to this school. During the inspection pupils spoke about their love of the school. In particular, the older pupils spoke about the extra responsibilities they have. They relish the opportunities to become a buddy to a child in Reception, a play leader, a school councillor or a librarian. Relationships between the staff and pupils are strong. You are ambitious for every child in the school to do well and know each of them by name. You are well supported by staff, parents and governors.

You have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school. You and your leadership team meet regularly to discuss the progress and needs of individual children. Pupils' learning is monitored well by teachers and their progress is tracked carefully. We looked at the school's most recent data for all year groups, which shows that all current pupils are making good progress from their starting points. We looked at the current data for all year groups. This detailed information about the progress of pupils is shared with the governors in a timely manner.

Governors are supportive of the school. They are proactive in visiting the school and

are involved closely in the self-evaluation process. They are passionate for this school to continue to provide a good level of education. Governors provide professional support and challenge to you in equal measure. Governors typically described the school as, 'A small village school that is like a family. Pupils know each other well and they all get on.' You ensure that governors are well informed about trends in performance and attendance. They are beginning to develop their skills of focusing on the improvements and specific actions that need to be made for the school to remain good.

Disappointing results at the end of key stage one last year have not dampened leaders' drive for improvement. New plans are in place to ensure that all pupils make better progress from their starting points. In response to these results you have put strategies in place which are intended to ensure that more pupils attain the higher standards in writing, mathematics and reading. Initial signs are promising as progress for current pupils is accelerating. For example, we looked at the work of the pupils in Year 2 and we could see clear progress in their writing from the beginning of the term. Pupils edited sentences to ensure that they conveyed greater meaning. We observed Year 3 pupils confidently find fractions of amounts in two-step word problems.

You and your staff work closely with a range of partner schools from the Chorley headteachers in partnership group. This allows teachers and leaders to work alongside 14 other schools. Collaborative working with other leaders allows you to share expertise about assessment. You work closely with headteachers from other schools to evaluate your own effectiveness. You say that engaging in professional challenge is helping you to raise expectations and provide invaluable training opportunities for staff. Staff that I spoke to talked about the benefits of working alongside colleague teachers from other schools. The moderation of writing has been helpful to you in quality-assuring the accuracy of your own assessments.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. Checks on the suitability of staff to work in the school are robust. The chair of governors regularly checks the single central record to ensure that it remains compliant. Staff and governors have received up-to-date safeguarding training, and a number have received training in safer recruitment. Leaders work well with outside agencies when safeguarding concerns arise. Recently, the police and a children's charity have spoken to the pupils about how to stay safe online. Parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, feel that their children are safe, cared for well and well behaved.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection I focused on several key lines of enquiry, the first of which was related to the drop in the number of pupils attaining the higher standards at the end of key stage 1. Following last year's reading results, you have introduced a new system of guided reading. Through this new system you aim

to ensure that all groups of pupils meet age-related expectations. Assessment data for current pupils indicates that this new system is working. For example, pupils in Year 1 were observed reading a range of non-fiction texts. They understood the key features and were able to identify them. Pupils in Year 6 were observed reading a class novel. Pupils decoded new words and answered challenging questions about the author's intent.

- You and your teachers have attended training in writing and mathematics to help you challenge the most able pupils effectively. Regular meetings with your teachers enable you to track the progress of pupils carefully. As a result, teachers provide those pupils who need it most with the help and support to make better progress. You and I observed the teaching of mathematics. We saw teachers deliver mathematics to a broad spectrum of pupils. From looking in pupils' books we could see that work was pitched at appropriate levels, providing challenge to the most able and support to those who needed it.
- The second focus of my inspection related to the quality of the provision in the early years. Results for children leaving the early years have fluctuated greatly in recent years. Small class sizes have had a statistically significant impact on the overall results. You and I visited the mixed Reception and Year 1 class. We observed teaching assistants being used effectively to support children their learning and development. Children were actively engaged in meaningful activities and were inquisitive. They could explain what they were doing. The outdoor environment provides children with opportunities to develop their skills; they can build, climb and explore. Learning journals in the early years show evidence of a wide range of experiences. The class teacher carefully balances the needs of the Year 1 and the Reception class children. We observed phonics being delivered at different levels so that all pupils make progress. Throughout the inspection, I observed behaviour for learning that was strong. Teachers provide children with activities to ensure that they are challenged to attain the higher standards. For example, a pupil in Year 1 was able to identify that the 'ph' sound from photograph was the same 'ph' sound that appeared in alphabet.
- At the previous inspection, inspectors asked the school to maximise the time that pupils have to work things out for themselves. From speaking to pupils and looking in their books, it is clear to see that they have had ample opportunities to extend and consolidate their learning. Pupils write across a broad range of curriculum topics. For example, Year 6 pupils spoke about the work that they are currently doing about Russia. In Year 2, pupils have been learning about the Great Fire of London. During mathematics, we observed groups of pupils working on challenging tasks while careful intervention support from the teacher ensured that all pupils remained on task.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to challenge the most able pupils to achieve the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1

- staff maintain the sharp focus on improving the overall standards in the core subjects across the school.

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

Yours sincerely

John Donald
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, the acting deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. I also met with eight members of the governing body and with a representative of Lancashire local authority. I spoke informally with pupils at breaktime. You and I visited classes where we observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils. I spoke with parents as they brought their children to school. Account was also taken of 19 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including 19 free-text responses. I also considered the responses of 10 staff to Ofsted's online questionnaire and seven responses to the pupil questionnaire. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' attainment and progress. The school's single central record was checked. I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep children safe, safeguarding checks and attendance information. I undertook a review of the school's website.