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Mr Richard Unthank
Headteacher
St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
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Dear Mr Unthank

Short inspection of St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 3 October 2017 with George Gilmore Ofsted inspector, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained and built upon the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The areas requiring improvement at that time have been addressed effectively. There has been a year-on-year improvement in pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. The quality of teaching continues to improve. Staff training, as well as opportunities for them to see outstanding practice in other schools, is contributing to the improvements made.

St Peter's is an inclusive, ambitious and friendly school. As a result, pupils enjoy their time here. Pupils' attendance rates are high and exclusions are non-existent. The promotion of Christian values lies at the heart of everyone's work, including the pupils. In school these are represented by the four values of truthfulness, friendship, courage and responsibility. They provide the bedrock on which the superb relationships across the school, pupils' exemplary personal qualities, admirable behaviour and good achievements are built. You have nurtured a great sense of collegiality and mutual support and trust among your leaders, staff and governors. All work in unison to move the school forward successfully.

You, other leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of what is working well and what needs to improve. This is because systems to check the quality of learning, pupils' progress, attendance, behaviour and other aspects of the school's work are honest and regular. Changes are made quickly to address any

areas of concern, including any pupils at risk of underachieving. As a result, by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, they make good and sometimes exceptional progress from their starting points into school. This is also the case for the significant proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and attend one of your two additionally resourced bases.

You know there is still some work to do to make sure that achievements by the end of the early years and by the end of Year 2 are as strong as those in key stage 2. You are also aware that on occasions, work set for the pupils is not always matched precisely enough to their current skills and levels of understanding. When this happens, the pace of learning slows a little, particularly in writing and for the most able pupils. These are improvement priorities this year, along with securing the consistent application of the school's spelling policy. Pupils make common spelling errors that they repeat in later work.

St Peter's is proud to be at the hub of the community of Brotton. Pupils, including the many pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with complex social, emotional or behavioural needs, are welcomed and supported to enjoy their time in school. They achieve well. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the care, education and extra activities provided.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is of the highest priority. Staff are well trained and clear about their child protection and safeguarding responsibilities. Robust recruitment arrangements ensure that all staff employed are suitable to work with children. Referrals made to the local authority regarding pupils at risk of harm are timely and pursued rigorously. Designated leaders work with a range of external agencies to ensure that the right support can be secured to help pupils and their families in times of great need. Governors have a strong oversight of safeguarding and, like staff, are well trained and well informed. Safeguarding is a standing item on the agendas of all governing body meetings. This ensures that governors hold leaders to account appropriately for the actions they take to keep pupils safe.

Pupils told inspectors that they felt very safe and that they could go to any member of staff with a worry or concern. They value the way they have opportunities to learn about and discuss important issues regarding their safety, in school or the wider community. They report that bullying 'just doesn't happen here' because of the way they are taught to respect and care for one another and the values of respect and tolerance of others' views and opinions.

Inspection findings

- I came to school wanting to understand whether teaching had improved in order to ensure that more pupils were able to achieve highly, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics but also in the wider curriculum. Improvements in the way that reading is taught have resulted in a year-on-year rise in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard by the end of key stage 2.

- The progress made by Year 6 pupils in 2017 was well above that found nationally. This was also the case in writing and mathematics. There has also been an increase in the proportion of pupils achieving at greater depth, particularly by the end of key stage 2. The proportion is now above average in reading and well above average in mathematics. The proportion achieving at greater depth in writing is broadly average because occasionally teachers do not set activities that build on pupils' current writing skills well enough. When this happens, it limits the opportunity for the most able to make rapid progress. Some teachers do not use the school's spelling policy consistently, which leads to some pupils making common spelling errors that they repeat in their independent work.
- Pupils' achievements at the end of the early years and key stage 1 are also improving but they are still not as strong as those in key stage 2. Nevertheless, pupils' books, learning diaries, observations of learning and your own assessment information show that these pupils also make good progress. The many pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress because of the individually planned activities they undertake and the strong care and support provided.
- Improvements evident in the early years are in part due to the good impact of the two-year-old provision, 'St Peter's Ark'. This has developed since the last inspection. Children settle into the setting quickly because of the superb relationships developed with staff. They thoroughly enjoy taking part in all of the carefully planned activities and experiences on offer. The development of children's speaking, listening and communication skills is a strength.
- Pupils achieve well across the wider curriculum. The curriculum stimulates their interest and as a result, pupils are keen to attend school and take part in all that is on offer. The rich curriculum is enhanced by many visits out of school and visitors to school. Such work broadens pupils' horizons and raises their aspirations. An array of after-school and holiday clubs provides something for everyone, from the sports to the arts, music and the regionally-renowned Lego club. Superb displays on the 'Stone Age' and the 'River' showcase the interesting and high-quality creative work and artefacts that pupils produce.
- I also wanted to check if pupils' personal development and welfare was still strong and to see if all pupils attend school regularly. Pupils' personal, social, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development remains a tangible strength. Pupils relish the many opportunities in the curriculum and assemblies that focus on celebrating the diversity of faiths and cultures across the globe. Pupils learn the qualities of respect for others and value others' views. They appreciate the many roles and responsibilities they have in school and particularly their roles in helping others.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they become thoughtful and caring members of the school and local community during their time at St Peter's. Your focus on working with families of pupils who have been reluctant to attend in the past has worked well. Attendance rates of all groups of pupils are at least average and often above those found nationally.

- Governance is strong. Governors provide insightful challenge and support to you and other leaders and make sure they carry out their roles and statutory responsibilities well.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- planned actions to improve writing are implemented so that greater proportions of pupils can write with increasing quality and complexity and achieve highly
- work being undertaken in the early years and key stage 1 ensures that children's and pupils' learning and development is as strong as that found in key stage 2
- teachers ensure that they use the school's spelling policy consistently so that pupils' simple spelling errors are checked and challenged.

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

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with you, senior leaders, staff and representatives of the governing body. A discussion was also held with a school improvement officer from Redcar and Cleveland local authority. Inspectors observed learning across the school. You accompanied me on visits to a number of lessons. We talked to pupils about their learning and reviewed their workbooks as we went around the classes. Inspectors spoke informally to pupils on the playground at breaktime and at lunchtime, and formally to a group of key stage 2 pupils. A range of documents were reviewed, including records of the recruitment checks on staff, the school's written evaluation of its work and the school improvement plan. Information about pupils' achievements, progress and attendance across the school was also reviewed and discussed during meetings. Inspectors considered the views of the 74 parents who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Additionally inspectors considered the 25 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire and the 37 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. Fifteen parents made written comments by text, which were also taken into account.