

15 October 2018

Mrs Alison Dickinson
Acting Headteacher
Raughton Head Church of England School
Raughton Head
Carlisle
Cumbria
CA5 7DD

Dear Mrs Dickinson

Short inspection of Raughton Head Church of England School

Following my visit to the school on 3 October 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 March 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Parents, pupils and staff agree that you have made significant improvements to the school since you took up post in January of this year. Indeed, the improvements to some aspects of the school have been both considerable and rapid. However, there was much to do and there are some parts that need further improvement.

After the last inspection, there was a dip in the quality of education. In the main, leaders did not manage some long-term absences of key staff well enough. Around the same time, the quality of pupils' behaviour deteriorated and pupils' approach to their learning was not as good as it had been. Three years ago, the local authority provided a review of the school's quality of education which identified weaknesses. School leaders did not address these quickly or effectively. Staff who have been at the school for some time say that they felt they were working in isolation and not benefiting from sharing knowledge and successful practice.

Around two years ago, the quality of teaching and learning began to improve in key stage 2. Pupils currently in this phase are making consistently good progress because they are being very well taught. There is a clear understanding of pupils' abilities and their prior learning. Expectations of what pupils can achieve, whether they are in Year 3 or in Year 6, are very high. Pupils are inspired to work with enthusiasm. The key stage 2 curriculum is diverse and engaging. These pupils are

showing that they have a love of learning and are highly motivated to succeed. The quality of pupils' work in science is particularly strong.

When you joined the school, you made very accurate evaluations of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. You recognised that the quality of education in the early years and key stage 1 phases was not good and have started to improve these areas. Working with governors and the local authority, you began to address the significant budget deficit the school had accumulated, including a significant restructuring of staffing. Governors, parents and pupils credit you with introducing a very different and highly positive ethos around the school. Pupils now behave very well. They are evidently happy and feel safe. Parents say that they can talk to you and other members of staff. Parents and pupils comment on the much richer curriculum, which is very well supplemented by visits and visitors. Staff are relishing the opportunities that they have to act as a team, discussing effective teaching strategies and the progress pupils are making.

You are bringing structure to all aspects of the school. For example, staff are now beginning to collaborate in more detail on the topics and content that they require pupils to cover. This enables staff to have a more systematic approach to developing the curriculum, ensuring pupils' learning builds on previous knowledge, and improving their progression.

There are evident weaknesses in provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. You have not yet been able to apply a more systematic approach to the provision for these pupils. Consequently, information about pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and how to support them is fragmented and not fully understood by all key staff. High-quality dialogue between staff and parents has not taken place. Thus far, the school has not been able to evaluate accurately the impact of this provision on the progress made by these pupils.

Leaders have addressed the aspects identified at the last inspection as in need of improvement. The quality of teaching mathematics has improved, particularly in key stage 2. You have raised everyone's expectations. Staff welcome this challenge, seeing it as a much more professional approach. You and governors are in a much stronger position to evaluate the quality of the work of staff because you are successfully making a link, in everyone's eyes, between what staff do and the impact this has on pupils' learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school's open and supportive culture is the key factor in ensuring that pupils in the school are safe. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Pupils trust staff. They will confide in staff if they have any concerns about themselves or indeed other pupils. Safeguarding training is of good quality, up to date and frequent. All staff know with confidence when and with whom they should raise concerns about the safety or welfare of a pupil. The designated member of staff for leading safeguarding manages procedures and processes well. Record keeping is

detailed and informative. Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Inspection findings

- Parents, pupils and staff agree that behaviour since the last inspection had declined. Pupils felt intimidated by the behaviour of a few pupils. They also agree that it is now very much better. Improvements in teaching and in the topics chosen by teachers help pupils engage much more easily with their learning. Teachers, particularly in key stage 2, expect pupils to work hard and excel. Pupils rise to this challenge and their endeavour and ambition are evident in their high-quality work. Around school and outdoors, pupils behave very well. They are happy, and pupils of all ages mix and play together. Older pupils take responsibility for looking after younger ones. When sitting down for lunch, pupils are calm and engage in conversation with each other. Pupils say that there is no bullying in the school because they have learned about bullying and they do not want it in their school. The management of behaviour is now subtle and highly effective.
- You are making improvements across the early years provision and key stage 1. You are taking action to address inconsistencies in staff's assessments of pupils' and children's learning. Staff are beginning to assess important aspects of learning, whereas in the past, they were evaluating what was easy to record. You have created a culture where teachers and teaching assistant discuss what is being taught and how it links with learning in previous years and in future years. Teachers discuss the progress that pupils and children make and are developing the habit of showing examples to support their assessments. With this more systematic approach to assessment and curriculum, teachers are much better prepared to plan activities that more closely match the needs of children and pupils. However, it is too early to see the full impact of these changes. Weaknesses in assessment and the quality of the curriculum remain. As a result, pupils' and children's progress is not consistently good. The accurate assessment of pupils and the provision for a coherent curriculum are much further advanced in key stage 2.
- The quality of teaching mathematics is improving throughout the school, most rapidly in key stage 2. These pupils are quickly gaining confidence and developing skills in using mathematics to solve problems. Pupils of all ages and abilities are well taught because teachers have excellent subject knowledge and know how to motivate and engage pupils. The coherence of teaching mathematics seen in key stage 2 is beginning to develop across younger classes.
- Governors are now managing the school's budget to greater effect, reducing a deficit. They have also effectively managed the appointments of staff in recent years. Governors are eager to see a high quality of education continue at Raughton Head. They are committed to improving their own skills. They know that they could improve the effectiveness of how they challenge staff to improve. To achieve this, governors will receive local authority training next month. In addition, the local authority has stepped up the support it is giving the school and you are finding this particularly helpful. You have achieved much in the short time you have been the acting headteacher at Raughton Head School, but most

significantly you have changed the culture of the school, so pupils and staff are keen to improve and, with your support, feel able to do so. Parents have faith in you and are very optimistic about the future. One parent texted me this comment, and its sentiment was typical: 'The recent change in leadership at the school has been alarmingly effective and we can only see the school going from strength to strength.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- improve the quality of education and achievement across early years and key stage 1 by:
 - ensuring that assessments of what children and pupils understand are accurate, and that teachers use this to inform their next steps in teaching
 - improving the curriculum so children's and pupils' understanding is developed systematically over time
- improve provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities by ensuring that:
 - pupils' needs are accurately assessed
 - staff meet requirements for producing plans to support these pupils
 - staff are fully informed on how to best support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - the progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is monitored and evaluated.

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

Yours sincerely

Neil Mackenzie

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Throughout the inspection, we discussed many aspects of your school. I visited classes and spent time with the teacher of key stage 2 and scrutinised pupils' work. I met with five members of the governing body and spoke with a representative of the local authority. I spoke with pupils during their break- and lunchtime. I scrutinised school documents, including safeguarding checks, child protection information and information about pupils' achievement. I met with all teachers, all teaching assistants and the school administrator. I received 24 comments from parents by text and took account of 25 responses parents had made on Parent View. I also spoke to seven parents as they brought their children to school. I took

account of nine staff responses to an inspection survey of their views, and the responses of 25 pupils made through their survey.