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Mrs Sarah Moore
Headteacher
Foston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Foston
York
North Yorkshire
YO60 7QB

Dear Mrs Moore

Short inspection of Foston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 December 2015, 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 May 2011.

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 set a clear vision to drive the school forward that is well understood by other school leaders and staff. By developing leadership opportunities across both of the two schools you lead, you have successfully increased the capacity of middle leaders to contribute to the school's development. Your forward thinking is developing the skills of future school leaders.

You have created an inclusive school with aspirational expectations for all pupils, regardless of their starting points. Parents confirm that the school is a caring and welcoming place to send their children. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and they understand the school's systems for rewarding good behaviour.

The school has successfully tackled the two areas identified for improvement at the last inspection. First, it has deepened pupils' understanding of the lives and experiences of people from a wide range of religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, both nationally and internationally. Through effective links with an urban school, pupils have the opportunity to increase their understanding of pupils with different backgrounds and experiences. Pupils visit a range of places of worship, so are improving their knowledge and understanding of the different faiths found in modern Britain. Second, subject leaders are making a greater difference to the standards pupils achieve.

You have recently introduced new systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress and achievement in line with the standards set by the new national curriculum. Staff and governors are developing their understanding of these systems and thus not all of them are using this information as effectively as you would wish.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils thrive in the school's welcoming and friendly atmosphere. They say that incidents of bullying are extremely rare. The school's records demonstrate that school leaders have successfully followed up and tackled the few incidents of bullying that are reported. Pupils understand some different forms of bullying and know who they can talk to if they have concerns. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Parents are extremely satisfied with how the school cares for their children.

The leadership team makes sure day-to-day safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Rigorous checks are carried out for all staff, governors and volunteers. Governors and staff have recently had training about keeping pupils safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. You and the governors accept that the school's recently updated safeguarding policy needs to be made available on the school's website promptly. In addition, there is work to be done to ensure the school's equal opportunities policy includes all groups covered by legislation.

Inspection findings

- The curriculum is well matched to pupils' interests and pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. Increased opportunities to learn beyond the school locality means that pupils are gaining a better understanding of life in modern Britain. The school council is enhancing pupils' understanding of democracy by providing opportunities to influence some of the decisions in school.
- The relevant professional development that is in place for all teachers and the good systems for checking on teaching make sure that its quality is maintained at a consistently good level. Where teaching is very strong, such as in the mixed early years and Key Stage 1 class, you ensure that this good practice is shared across the school and with other schools. Teaching assistants are very effective in supporting pupils' learning, including those pupils with special educational needs.
- The recently introduced systems for measuring and recording pupils' progress are generating useful information. Staff are using this information with increasing confidence to support teaching and identify gaps in pupils' learning. This is at an early stage of development and not yet fully embedded.
- Current pupils are making at least the expected progress in English and mathematics and many are making more than the expected progress. This includes pupils with special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged. Although in 2015 results in national assessments in

grammar, punctuation and spelling and in mathematics were not as high as they could have been, you have promptly put in place improvements to tackle these issues.

- Provision for children in the early years is very strong. Well-organised teaching delivered by the teacher with support from the teaching assistant ensures that these children make good progress. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been at least in line with the national figure recently and in some years it has been above it.
- Very effective leadership for English and mathematics is in place. You make good use of opportunities to coordinate these roles across the two schools you lead. This has maximised the use of these leaders' skills and has increased training opportunities in both schools. Detailed school development plans are in place and leaders check to see if the plans are making a difference. Subject leaders have the skills to complete this successfully because they have received relevant leadership training.
- The governing body is improving its understanding of the school's developments through the information governors receive from you and their visits into school. However, at present, governors do not fully understand the information you provide about pupils' current progress from the school's new assessment and recording system.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is strong. Some parents choose your school because of the high quality of the school's provision for these children, even when this means travelling a distance.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is a strength of the school. Pupils understand the school's 'Fruit of the Spirit' values and they celebrate when others demonstrate these. Behaviour in lessons and at playtimes is very good. This is because all staff set high expectations.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- all staff use the recently developed assessment and recording system accurately and consistently to check pupils' progress in English and mathematics.
- governors develop their understanding of the school's information about pupils' progress so they can provide sharper challenge to senior and middle leaders about pupils' achievement.
- the school's website is up to date and review the school's work and policies on equal opportunities.

Yours sincerely

Michael Reeves
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection I discussed the work of the school with you and your middle leaders who have responsibility for English, mathematics and the provision for pupils with special educational needs. I talked with pupils and parents about what it feels like to be a member of the school community and looked at responses to parent questionnaires. I observed and spoke with pupils during playtime and at other times during the day. I held discussions with a representative of the local authority and with three governors who were able to provide me with additional information. I also took into account school documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website. Alongside you, I visited both classrooms to observe teaching and learning and looked at pupils' work to consider the progress pupils make.