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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Rachael Greenhalgh
Headteacher
Gayton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Lynn Road
Gayton
King's Lynn
Norfolk
PE32 1PA

Dear Mrs Greenhalgh

Short inspection of Gayton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 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 April 2012.

This school continues to be good

You, together with your staff team and governors, have continued to secure significant improvements to the school since the last inspection. Your calm but determined approach has ensured that all staff understand your high expectations for all pupils and have raised their own expectations of pupils and of themselves. You have provided training and support for staff so that they develop their professional skills, and this is highly valued by all staff. They willingly take on additional responsibilities so that they can develop further. Through your commitment to developing your staff, you have created a friendly and harmonious team who work effectively together. You have been able to retain good staff, and recruit replacements of a high standard when others are on leave, so that pupils benefit from consistency in teaching. Your governors are highly committed to the school. They support you well, visiting the school and providing helpful feedback, for example following visits to classes with subject leaders. Governors share your ambition for the school and support you well in building on its many strengths.

Pupils make good progress at Gayton Primary School, because teaching is good across all classes. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They provide pupils with different levels of challenge and make it clear that pupils should challenge themselves. Pupils respond accordingly. One pupil told me, 'This is a school where everyone perseveres.' Teachers explain tasks well to pupils and ask questions that make pupils think hard. For example, during the inspection a teacher asked Year 6

pupils about what literary features they should include in their writing, and why. Teachers' use of regular assessment helps them to check what pupils already know so that they plan effectively for what pupils need to learn next, for example the use of 'cold' tasks to indicate what pupils know and, following teaching input, 'hot' tasks to show what they have learned. Occasionally, teachers do not take sufficient account of what pupils already know. When this happens, pupils do not find the work difficult enough, and do not make the rapid progress that they should.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is good. They care for one another, because you and the staff talk with them regularly about care and respect for all people, linking this to the school's Christian ethos. Pupils told me that playtimes are enjoyable because 'everyone is friendly'. They also spoke with pride about the opportunities that they are given to take on responsibilities, such as to be a playground 'ELF' (everyone's listening friend), helping to sort out any small problems that may arise. Pupils also spoke about the different activities provided at playtimes and how some pupils train to acquire the skills to organise these activities. Through opportunities such as these, you are ensuring that pupils at Gayton Primary School develop into well-rounded and thoughtful individuals.

You and your staff are determined to ensure that 'the school provides everything for pupils that I would want for my own children'. Adults take time and care to plan and deliver a broad curriculum that has varied and interesting opportunities for learning. All pupils have the chance to learn a musical instrument, often more than one, and benefit from specialist music teaching. During the inspection, some pupils were performing a small concert for parents. Pupils take part in lots of different sporting activities and competitions. Visitors, such as a 'Viking', enhance learning in topics and bring the curriculum to life, as do trips such as the visit to a space centre which pupils told me about with enthusiasm.

Since the last inspection, you have improved the quality of pupils' writing by ensuring that they develop their work through the context of other subjects. I saw many examples of high-quality writing, including poems and journalistic reports linked to the class's current theme. Despite this, a few pupils say that writing lessons are not always as interesting as they could be.

The vast majority of parents appreciate the work of adults in the school. One parent, who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, commented particularly on the positive role model that you provide for others: 'Mrs Greenhalgh... has an infectious can-do attitude which sets a fantastic example for staff and children.' Testament to this parental view of the school is that almost every parent who responded to this questionnaire would recommend the school to another parent.

Safeguarding is effective.

Highly robust systems are in place to ensure that all pupils are safe. You ensure that all pre-employment checks on staff are carried out in line with statutory requirements. You and the governor responsible for safeguarding check the single central record regularly. You and the teacher who leads on safeguarding maintain

very clear and well-organised files for any pupils about whom there are concerns. You work closely, and check regularly, to ensure that nothing is missed. Your pupil files demonstrate that teachers know the potential signs when a pupil is at risk. This shows that the regular training that they undertake is effective. Your close liaison with outside agencies ensures that action is taken quickly when concerns are raised. You carefully draw together important information about pupils, such as attendance and any concerns raised by staff, so that nothing is missed in relation to keeping pupils safe.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed that mathematics would be an area to investigate further. This was because in 2016 the proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected standard in the new mathematics assessments was below that found nationally. You and the subject leader for mathematics said that because outcomes in mathematics had previously been strong in Year 6 and Year 2, staff had shifted their focus to improving standards in reading and writing. As a result, teachers were not fully prepared for the requirements of the new assessment, meaning that pupils had gaps in their learning.
- In response to the 2016 results, your subject leader has thoroughly analysed pupils' areas of strength and weakness. For example, he has identified that some aspects of mathematics, such as fractions, had not been taught in sufficient depth for some pupils to grasp fully. He has also recognised that some pupils were not used to answering mathematical questions quickly enough. Your subject leader has reviewed the curriculum for mathematics across the school to ensure that all areas receive sufficient attention. He has introduced changes to improve pupils' fluency with basic number facts so that they are able to work more quickly, for example through the use of rapid maths tasks each day. These changes are having a positive impact.
- Pupils' work in books and the school's assessment information show that pupils currently in the school are making good progress in mathematics. Some pupils, who have had difficulties with mathematics in the past, receive additional support. This has resulted in very rapid improvements in their mathematical skills within a short space of time.
- Leaders have given mathematics a much higher profile in the school. For example, events such as 'Inspirational Mathematics Week' give pupils greater opportunities for problem solving. Practical mathematical activities have been introduced, as shown in the class books. However, some of the learning from these practical tasks is not always captured for individual pupils. Consequently, teachers are not always able to use this information to assess pupils' knowledge and to plan subsequent tasks.
- You and your mathematics leader recognise that reasoning about number, while promoted well in some classes, is not fully developed in all classes.
- The last inspection report identified the need to develop provision for outdoor learning for children in the Reception Year. You have acted upon this and the outdoor space is a well-planned and attractive learning environment. Activities

outside promote learning well, for example providing opportunities to use construction equipment, to read outdoors and to explore the wider environment. During the inspection, children were happily donning their outdoor boots and wet-weather jackets so that they could enjoy using the water tray outdoors.

- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year dipped in 2015, but recovered to around that found nationally in 2016. You were able to demonstrate to me, using school assessment information, that these children made good progress from their starting points. Learning journeys show that children currently in the Reception class are making good progress, particularly in mathematics. For example, some children are already confidently recording number sentences independently and are able to use numbers in a wide variety of contexts.
- We looked at phonics, as this was an area in which outcomes had declined. The teaching of phonics in the Reception class enables children to learn their sounds well, because adults carefully tailor the activities to children's needs. This good start in phonics is built upon in Year 2. For example, pupils practise their sounds and apply these to writing words and sentences well. The good teaching of sounds in the Reception Year is helping to raise the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the phonics assessment at the end of Year 1.
- During the inspection, we looked at the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, because the published data did not provide a clear indication of the progress that these pupils make. You have a very secure knowledge of these pupils because, together with your leader for special educational needs and your advisory teacher for special educational needs, you carefully identify additional needs. You plan the support for these pupils carefully. For example, you assess pupils prior to each period of support and then reassess them following approximately six weeks of support. In this way, you know exactly what works and how to help pupils to make progress.
- Leaders' planning and evaluation of the additional support provided for pupils in class are equally thorough. Leaders visit classes each half term to see what teachers are putting in place to support pupils and to make suggestions when more needs to be done. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in school.
- We also looked at the progress made by pupils who are disadvantaged, because the published data showed some variability in outcomes for these pupils. Consequently, I wanted to check that provision for these pupils was helping them to make good progress. Inspection evidence shows that most of these pupils make good progress. However, support for the youngest children is not always sufficient to enable them to make rapid progress, so that they achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.
- You are aware that the attendance of a small number of disadvantaged pupils is lower than it should be. You are working effectively with parents and the school's attendance officer to ensure that these pupils' attendance is as high as that of the vast majority of other pupils.

- You know that the most able disadvantaged pupils achieve the expected standard by the end of Year 6. However, these pupils require more sharply focused support to enable them to reach the higher standard of which they are capable. Governors are aware that provision for these pupils is an area that, in the past, they have not questioned or challenged you about sufficiently.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Strategies that are put in place to improve outcomes for mathematics are firmly embedded in all classes, and opportunities for reasoning about number are developed more consistently.
- Support for some disadvantaged pupils is more sharply focused and checked in more detail by governors, so that:
 - disadvantaged children in the Reception class catch up more quickly
 - the most able disadvantaged pupils achieve the higher standards that they should.

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

Yours sincerely

Maria Curry
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, spoke with a representative of the local authority and met with two governors. I met with a small number of pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6. I scrutinised a range of documents, including information on pupils' progress, safeguarding, development planning and the school's self-evaluation. I visited all classes and evaluated pupils' work. I evaluated the school's website and found it to meet requirements on the publication of specified information.