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Mrs Louise Laskey  
Headteacher  
Grange View Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School  
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Dear Mrs Laskey

### **Short inspection of Grange View Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School**

Following my visit to the school on 27 February 2019, 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 February 2015.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Working alongside a supportive governing body and by using experience and skilful leadership, you have brought about improvements to teaching and learning. There is a tangible drive and a sense of urgency to provide high-quality learning opportunities which allow pupils to thrive. This ambition is shared by all staff. You have addressed issues of underperformance and have brought together a skilled and enthusiastic teaching team.

You have raised your expectations of pupils' outcomes and improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment through good-quality professional development for staff and by sharing good practice with other schools. These improvements are now speeding up the rates of progress that pupils make in their learning. You keep a close eye on the quality of teaching, and your feedback to teachers links directly to focused school improvement planning and teacher appraisal. You have ensured that refinements to the tracking of pupils' progress lead to an accurate analysis of their progress, and identify whether pupils are on course to reach the standard expected for their age. You acknowledge that some teachers do not always pitch work appropriately, and so some activities do not fully challenge and stretch pupils, particularly in independent writing across a range of subjects.

Working in a small school, your teachers know each pupil very well and adapt their teaching skilfully to meet pupils' needs. This is exemplified by the good work you do

to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Thorough planning, in consultation with parents, has ensured that pupils' needs are well met, allowing them to thrive and make good progress from their starting points. It is also noticeable how kind and caring pupils are to one another.

Governors have a good understanding of how well the school is doing. They come from a wide range of backgrounds and use their experience well to ask challenging and pertinent questions of leaders. Effective systems and procedures are in place that allow governors to read reports in good time prior to their meetings. This helps them to formulate key questions they wish to ask leaders. Governors recognise the need to keep a closer eye on how well pupils are progressing across the wider curriculum as well as making sure that the school's plans clearly state how opportunities will be provided to challenge the most able pupils further.

Pupils told me they enjoy coming to school and feel safe and this view supports my inspection findings; I observed happy, content and friendly faces throughout the day. Older pupils set a good example to their younger peers through their work as playground monitors and the leadership they provide via the school council. Consequently, pupils like coming to school and look forward to the varied and rich topics that your curriculum provides.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Senior leaders, together with governors, ensure that safeguarding arrangements are always at the forefront of their thinking. Frequent child protection training for staff and governors ensures that all are knowledgeable and up to date in terms of the most recent legislation and guidance. Adults are highly vigilant and are clear about their duties regarding the welfare and protection of pupils. Concerns are logged and records are well maintained. External agencies are used to secure support and specialist advice for vulnerable pupils and families, where required.

Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after. They have complete faith that adults in school will listen to them if they are worried or would like to talk. Pupils do not feel that bullying is an issue. They are confident that any issues of poorer behaviour or mishaps in the playground will be dealt with fairly and firmly. The curriculum supports pupils well in maintaining their own safety, including keeping themselves safe online.

Almost all parents state that their children are safe in school. The culture of keeping pupils safe and putting them at the heart of the inclusive, friendly school community is very evident. The school promotes pupils' personal, social and emotional development very well, and pupils show high levels of respect for each other, their school and their local community.

### **Inspection findings**

- You are ambitious for all pupils at the school. Staff know pupils as individuals and pay close attention to the needs and capabilities of each child. This leads to highly positive relationships between staff and pupils.

- Records demonstrate that you are diligent in tracking and monitoring pupils' progress from their different starting points in each year group.
- Governors are well informed and have a good understanding of the school's work. The broad experiences that governors bring to the school help them to effectively support leaders and also hold them to account for the progress of pupils. Moreover, governors draw on their wide-ranging skills to make a strong contribution to school improvement. Teachers' ongoing assessments and monitoring of pupils' depth of understanding in their work allow planned activities to be amended or changed, or extra support deployed. Ensuring that pupils, especially the most able, are always sufficiently challenged is an area you are continuing to address. The teaching I saw during the inspection and work in books suggest that all pupils are usually given appropriately challenging work, but this is not fully consistent.
- Children get off to a strong start in their learning in the early years. Reception and Nursery children play and learn happily alongside each other, sticking at tasks and maintaining their concentration. Adults support children's learning well. They use effective questioning and provide a range of activities to support children's writing and understanding of numbers.
- Pupils make a good start in their reading. The systematic teaching of phonics starts in Nursery, and continues into key stage 1. Some pupils read fluently to the inspector during visits to classes. Pupils read widely and often, and are developing a love of reading. Pupils in key stage 2 are beginning to develop deeper skills of inference and deduction when reading.
- The quality of teaching is generally of a high standard. Teachers and support assistants use questioning skilfully to encourage pupils to think deeply about their learning. Teachers explain tasks and new concepts clearly, using demonstrations effectively to support understanding. Pupils' books show that teachers and pupils share high expectations. Pride in presentation and pupils' commitment to improving their work is evident.
- Leaders are managing pupil premium spending effectively to provide targeted support for disadvantaged pupils. This support is regularly evaluated for its impact on pupils' learning, and amended as a result. The positive impact of this support is seen through the improving progress made by current disadvantaged pupils across the school. Differences are diminishing between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally with the same starting points, and have been eliminated between their peers in some year groups. Despite better progress, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, including those who are the most able, still lags behind that of other pupils nationally. The school acknowledges that further work is still required to accelerate this group of pupils' progress, and especially that of the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils are proud of their school and find it enjoyable. They are considerate to each other as well as adults, and playtimes are cheerful affairs. The environment is secure and well looked after, with a range of opportunities for play and exploration. The manner in which pupils move around the school is calm and lunchtimes are harmonious.

- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is an unmistakable strength of the school. Pupils' conduct during lessons and outside at playtimes is good. Pupils behave respectfully and with consideration for others.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this reflects in their good attendance. A very small minority of pupils do not attend as regularly as they should and you have well-established systems in place to deal with this. Support for families, individual and tailored to meet their needs, is provided through an education welfare officer.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils are consistently challenged to reach the higher standards of which they are capable
- there are frequent opportunities for pupils to write creatively and imaginatively across a range of curriculum subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Seagrove  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the assistant headteacher and the English leader. You and I jointly observed teaching, learning and assessment in classes across the school. I met with four members of the governing body and the school's local authority improvement partner and I spoke with the director of education for the Diocese of Newcastle. I talked to pupils about their work and their views of the school. I listened to pupils read and we looked in workbooks when in lessons. A range of documents were considered relating to safeguarding and external evaluations of the school. I examined the school's self-evaluation summary, the school improvement plan, the school's monitoring records and assessment information about current pupils' progress. I also scrutinised pupils' achievement in the 2018 statutory assessments, responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, and the school's website.