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Mrs Julie Morton Lee  
Executive Headteacher  
Grassington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School  
Acre Lane  
Grassington  
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North Yorkshire  
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Dear Mrs Morton Lee

### **Short inspection of Grassington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 24 May 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 on 17 July 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the school began working alongside three other local schools, formally federating on 1 February 2017. Working alongside a newly formed, hard-working and supportive governing body, your skilful and determined leadership has brought about significant improvements to teaching and learning. There is a tangible drive and sense of urgency to provide high-quality opportunities which allow pupils to thrive: an ambition shared by all staff. You have identified and evaluated the school's strengths and current priorities and you detail further actions to address these priorities in the comprehensive school development plan. You acknowledge that planned actions are not yet closely aligned to the progress that pupils make in their learning. Nevertheless, ambitious targets for pupils are found elsewhere in data-tracking documents and objectives for teachers' appraisal.

Improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are accelerating quickly the rates of progress of current pupils across the school. You, governors and other school leaders across the federation keep a close eye on the quality of teaching. You do this, for example, by monitoring teachers' planning for lessons and analysing work in pupils' books. You hold discussions with pupils about their learning and spend time visiting classes to observe teaching and learning.

Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning and good relationships with adults remain key strengths of your inclusive school. Pupils develop good citizenship skills, being keen to take on responsibilities through roles such as 'class monitor' for a wide variety of tasks, from ringing the school bell to organising books, being a member of the school council and the collective worship council. Pupils take great pride in the well-ordered and attractive school environment, both inside and outside, and have plans to develop and reorganise the wildlife garden. Pupils benefit from quality displays in classes and shared areas, and their behaviour in class and around school remains exemplary. Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent; most are very eager to work hard.

At the previous inspection of the school, leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching, especially in mathematics, so that it was of a consistently high standard. This has been tackled with resolve, but you acknowledge that work is still to be undertaken to drive forward further improvements. Pupils speak clearly about the opportunities they have to respond to teachers' feedback, completing further challenges to consolidate their learning. Teachers' expectations of pupils are very high. Teachers have planned learning activities that are age-appropriate in their classes that encompass three different age groups of pupils, such as in mathematics, where all pupils in one class were investigating and interpreting bar graphs. There is still further work needed to ensure that pupils are consistently stretched and challenged within each year group, including the most-able pupils and especially in mathematics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

In your role as designated safeguarding leader, you ensure that policies, procedures and records are of high quality and up to date. Your determination to leave no stone unturned in your duty to keep pupils safe is exemplified by a recent audit of all procedures, actions and records to check that pupils' welfare is secured. You have overseen the school's security action plan to ensure that possible issues are minimised.

All staff are appropriately trained and have access to well-written policies and guidance. As a result, they have a secure understanding of their individual responsibilities for safeguarding pupils. Pupils are very knowledgeable about bullying and e-safety. They understand how to avoid situations that may prove dangerous when not at school. Parents are very clear that their children are happy and safe in school and they state this categorically in school questionnaires on Parent View, the Ofsted questionnaire for parents.

### **Inspection findings**

- The long-established culture of keeping pupils safe and putting them at the heart of this friendly and inclusive church school community remains very evident. The personal development and welfare of all pupils are an important focus for the school. Pupils' behaviour around school and in lessons is of a very high standard.

They are courteous, have good manners and are friendly towards visitors, adults and each other.

- There are very few recorded incidents of poor behaviour, and none of alleged bullying. The pupils with whom I spoke categorically stated that no bullying happens at Grassington Primary School, even if there are very occasional fall-outs between pupils. Pupils trust implicitly all adults in school to keep them safe and sort out any problems, valuing the 'traffic light' behaviour policy.
- Pupils have made consistently strong progress in their learning since September 2016. Work seen in books and in lessons clearly demonstrates this strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils who shared their favourite piece of work with me were surprised when they looked back at how much their work had improved since the start of the year.
- Teachers have high expectations for all pupils to make substantial progress in their learning, and that those who have fallen behind will catch up quickly. The school's accurate and informative system for tracking the progress of pupils shows that a much larger proportion of pupils in most year groups are on track to reach the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics than last year. The proportion of pupils in each year group who are working at greater depth is also increasing, although fewer work at greater depth in mathematics compared with reading and writing. The pupils who read to me during the inspection clearly enjoyed reading, and read fluently and with understanding.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their work ethic are strong and play an important part in their accelerating progress. Teachers consistently follow the school's marking policy, ensuring that pupils know their next steps in learning and undertake further challenges to consolidate their understanding. Teachers are now skilled at delivering age-appropriate activities within the same area of the curriculum in mixed age range classes. You acknowledge that individual challenge for some pupils to stretch their thinking and understanding, including for the most-able pupils, is sometimes lacking.
- The school's deployment of teaching assistants is very effective, and they are skilled at supporting the learning of groups of pupils across the school. In Nursery, children were encouraged to count mystery objects from a box, and skilful questioning supported children's understanding of patterns in number and an appreciation of simple number bonds. Adults use subject knowledge well, such as when a group of older pupils were shown how to represent missing values by inserting a symbol on the axis of a graph. The school is still working hard to ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to justify, explain and represent their reasoning in mathematical activities.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a shared drive to eradicate any underperformance and improve outcomes for pupils. You make it crystal clear that you will not settle for second best, or gloss over any weakness, no matter how small. The school is supported well by the local authority in driving forward school improvement, and in offering subject expertise, such as in mathematics. Planned actions within the development plan for the schools in the federation and

within individual subject areas are not yet closely aligned to the progress that pupils make in learning.

- Governors receive high-quality information, have links to key aspects of the school and are involved alongside leaders in monitoring activities. They are proud of the school's achievements, recognise the challenges it faces and are determined to improve their own effectiveness. Their recent skills audit has led to the appointment of a new governor with an expertise in finance to supplement an already strong range of professional skills and knowledge.
- The school's exciting and broad curriculum ensures that pupils have access to the local history and heritage of the area, and have opportunities to visit areas of special interest, such as the museum dedicated to William Wilberforce. Good use is made of visiting specialists, such as a German exchange student and a French language teacher, to enhance pupils' skills and understanding in foreign languages and culture. Pupils report a range of different subjects as being their favourite, including history, art, geography and especially science. Their topic books show a range of good-quality work across the curriculum, with no dip in presentation and standards.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- planned actions for school improvement are sharply focused on their impact on the progress that pupils make in their learning
- further opportunities are planned for pupils to justify and explain their reasoning in mathematical problem-solving activities
- teachers consistently plan activities that challenge and stretch pupils' thinking and understanding, including for the most-able pupils and especially in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Philip Scott  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the leader of mathematics and the school administrator. You and I visited lessons in each key stage. I met with the chair, and

other members, of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority. I spoke to a group of pupils about their work and their views of the school. They showed me a piece of work of which they were most proud. I listened to some pupils read and looked in workbooks when in lessons. A range of documents were considered relating to safeguarding, performance management and external evaluations of the school. I examined the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, the school's monitoring of its own performance and tracking of current pupils' progress. I also scrutinised pupils' recent achievement in statutory assessments and the school's website.