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Mr Jonathon Weeden  
Associate Headteacher  
Weeton St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School  
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Dear Mr Weeden

### **Short inspection of Weeton St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 1 March 2016, 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 2011.

Since the last inspection, the headteacher has left the school. You took up post as associate headteacher in January 2016.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is good and pupils achieve well. You have shown a strong start in your new role.

You are revitalising the school and renewing a common sense of purpose among staff. Morale is high. You have rapidly acquired a clear understanding of the school's strengths and the priorities for improvement. You have learned about staff, pupils and families in detail. You are focusing very successfully upon improving teaching and pupils' progress. Raising standards further is at the heart of your work. Staff, parents and pupils share great confidence in your knowledge and skills to lead the school forward. Typical comments to me by staff about your leadership are: 'he has brought vibrancy'; 'brought strength to the school'; and 'freshness'.

Over time, leaders have maintained the strengths of the school. For example, Weeton St Michael's continues to have a strong feeling of community among pupils. Across both classes in the school, pupils are given many opportunities to develop good links with one another. While playing outdoors, pupils mix successfully. The oldest pupils show much consideration for the youngest children.

The high standard of care, given by staff and leaders to individual children and pupils, means this remains a school where pupils can flourish and be themselves. Pupils told me very clearly that this high-quality care extends to the school food at lunchtime. Their comments included, 'The quality of the food is five star.' Pupils are also excited about the special foods experienced on a set day each week.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. A typical parental comment was, 'My child has developed, not only academically but as a person during their time at school. They enjoy the challenges set and always talk enthusiastically about what they have learnt.'

When an inspector visited the school in 2011, leaders were asked to raise pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics. Leaders and staff have tackled this successfully by improving pupils' skills in using grammar and punctuation and developing pupils' ability to use number skills accurately. Pupils are now given specific information about how to improve their learning. As a result, attainment has risen and pupils are achieving well across subjects.

Another area for improvement was to strengthen leaders' monitoring of subjects other than mathematics and English. This has been achieved by leaders checking pupils' learning carefully in all subjects. These arrangements now give leaders a clear and full view of the work of the school.

The inspector also recommended that in the early years, children's physical skills should be better developed when they are learning outdoors. Through improved resourcing, clear planning and skilled teaching by teachers and teaching assistants, younger children progress well in their physical development. They now develop skills in moving and coordinating themselves that are above average for their age.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team makes sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality. You, other leaders and staff know each family in detail and work closely with other professionals to give extra support to pupils and parents whenever it is needed. Every child and pupil I spoke to said they feel safe at school. They told me that bullying is rare and staff act quickly and successfully when they are aware of any issues. Parents have equal confidence in the ability of the school to protect pupils from harm. Staff with whom I spoke have a good understanding of the many modern risks that pupils face. For example, they know how to protect pupils from extremist views. Staff understand how to record and report any concerns about the behaviour or safety of children or adults. Arrangements to check the suitability of staff and volunteers who work in the school are thorough and up to date. Pupils and parents told me that the school is successful in promoting their awareness of how to keep safe online, including when using social media.

## Inspection findings

- Through good leadership, the school continues to improve and succeed. You have a strong understanding of what the school is achieving and how it will develop further. Your reviews of the school are clear, realistic and accurate. Your plans for improvement focus on the correct priorities. For example, you have clear plans for more workshops for parents about the curriculum and giving families increased advice about how to support children's learning at home.
- Great thought and consideration is given by you, staff and governors to the quality of the school environment. Resourcing is good and staff make full use of information and communication technology when teaching. Excellent displays on the walls in classrooms and around the school celebrate pupils' achievements and thoughtfully illustrate the different topics they are studying. This makes the school an attractive place to learn, where pupils' own work is valued highly.
- You are concentrating much effort on helping pupils to apply themselves within lessons and this focus is succeeding. Pupils told me that teaching challenges them and makes them think hard. Within teaching observed during the inspection, pupils listened and applied themselves keenly to their work. Staff have a good knowledge of the curriculum. They feel ably supported by you to refine their teaching skills through access to training and by learning from one another. They have confidence that you understand and can explain what the very best teaching looks like.
- Governors told me they aim to give pupils a broad range of learning experiences. Consequently, the school has invested in providing several extra-curricular clubs. Many different pupils told me how much they enjoy and benefit from activities, including singing club, sport and street dance. This shows the good use you are making of the primary sports premium. Pupils enjoy using their new skills in a variety of ways. For example, pupils recently performed a range of dances at Weeton village gala. The limited additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is also spent carefully. As a result, all disadvantaged pupils progress well.
- When children first join the school, staff assess pupils' existing skills and abilities in detail. Arrangements to track and record each pupil's progress against the new National Curriculum are good and improving. This means that you and your staff share a clear knowledge of individual pupils' needs. Where pupils are struggling with their learning, you make sure individual support to pupils is fine-tuned to their needs.
- Children in Reception are given a good start to their education. Links with parents and other settings are established successfully before children start at school. Teamwork between staff is strong and helps children learn successfully. Skilled teaching in the combined early years and Key Stage 1 class is enthusing pupils about learning. For example, pupils enjoy learning to use verbs and adjectives in their writing about cold places such as the Arctic and Antarctica.

- Over time, standards fluctuate in Year 6 because there are very small numbers of pupils undertaking national assessments each year. Nevertheless, you and governors know from a range of information that pupils make good progress and leave Weeton St Michael's ready for secondary school. You and I observed pupils being taught mathematics successfully in the Key Stage 2 class. Different groups of pupils were given clear explanations according to their ability. Pupils responded well in their learning about coordinates and measuring and naming angles. We discussed that more opportunities for solving mathematical problems will help all children, including the most able, and raise achievement further.
- Members of the governing body work closely with you and with the local authority to give the school clear strategic leadership. They take very seriously their responsibilities to maintain a healthy school budget and to establish the leadership of the school for the years ahead. You are working closely with the governing body to help governors give even greater challenge to staff and leaders about teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Behaviour is good and pupils are developing as valuable citizens due to a very successful focus by staff on children's and pupils' personal development. Pupils attend school regularly and they behave sensibly. They are considerate in how they talk about other people, for example when discussing families different to their own or referring to people who have a learning disability. Through good links between Weeton St Michael's and a school in Ghana, pupils understand how poverty can limit people's lives. Pupils told me they particularly value the opportunity to participate in the 'pupil leadership team'. Those selected for the role this year explained to me clearly how they make a significant contribution to decisions that affect the school, including about fund-raising priorities. They feel listened to; they know their views matter.

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

Leaders are already pursuing clear next steps for the improvement of the school. These include making sure that:

- pupils achieve even more highly in mathematics by increasing their ability to apply their mathematical knowledge and language through problem solving
- parents are fully engaged with supporting their children's learning at home and school
- the governing body gives a high level of challenge to staff and leaders about teaching and pupils' progress.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Blackburn, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Lancashire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tim Vaughan  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher to discuss your views of the school and your priorities for improvement. You and I observed teaching, learning and behaviour in both classrooms. We discussed examples of pupils' progress. I spoke to a number of staff and I reviewed responses from 10 staff to an Ofsted questionnaire. I checked school records of checks of the suitability of staff and volunteers. I met with the Chair of the Governing Body and five other governors. I met with a school adviser from Lancashire local authority. I spoke with pupils during lessons, in corridors and at other times of the day. I reviewed the views of 12 parents that were shared through Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I took account of the school's most recent parental questionnaire. I also spoke with some parents at the start of the inspection.