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Mrs Fiona Ip  
Headteacher  
Melling St Wilfrid Church of England Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Ip

### **Short inspection of Melling St Wilfrid Church of England 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 July 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since taking up your appointment as headteacher at the beginning of this term, you have already gained the confidence and respect of parents, pupils and staff. You know the school's strengths, recognise the unique qualities of the school and its community, and have a clear vision for the future. For example, you rightly identify the need to improve the provision for children in the early years and have already undertaken discussions with the school governors as to how this may happen as quickly as possible.

Your leadership, like that of your predecessor, is highly valued by all. Parents are wholly positive about the way that the school is led and managed. They speak highly of the school's welcoming 'open-door' policy and of the way that staff treat each child as an individual member of one large family. Staff share your passion to ensure that pupils do their very best, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils are proud of their school. They typically comment on the family atmosphere as well as the encouragement they receive to make good progress in their personal and academic development.

A key to the school's continuing success has been in securing a stable team of teachers and support staff. Following the last inspection, there was a period of some turbulence in staffing in key stage 2 and an accompanying decline in the

number of pupils on roll. Leaders and governors addressed this through making new appointments of talented staff who are committed to the school and have maintained the school's record of consistently good teaching. The number of pupils on roll has doubled within the last two years and this places the school in a much stronger position to sustain its vital place at the heart of the local community.

Leaders have successfully addressed the areas for improvement in key stage 2, identified in the last inspection report, in relation to pupils' progress in mathematics and the progress of most-able pupils in writing. Pupils currently in the school are making good progress in these subjects from their widely different starting points. Pupils' learning is carefully structured to build on their individual skills. Teachers turn the undoubted challenge of providing for the needs of multiple year groups in one class into an opportunity to accelerate pupils' learning and progress. Consequently, younger pupils benefit from learning alongside their older friends in class, frequently rising to the challenge of more difficult tasks and activities to extend their thinking and the range of their skills.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is a well-established part of the culture of the school. All pupils report that they feel safe. Parents agree and really appreciate the school's caring and nurturing approach. Staff know pupils well and explained to me that this means they can recognise the signs that there might be a possible cause for concern at the earliest stage, so they can take swift and appropriate action.

Around the school there are displays making pupils aware of how to keep safe, when using the internet, for example. Pupils speak about 'anti-bullying week' and say that there is no bullying in school of any kind.

Training for staff is up to date. Likewise, the school's policies and information meet the requirements of 'Keeping children safe in education' (2016). Consequently, you and your leaders, including governors, have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are appropriately detailed.

### **Inspection findings**

- Your appointment has made a very positive contribution to the stability of the school. You ensured that the change of headteacher caused no disruption in school by your calm and sensitive approach to leadership. This provides reassurance to parents, pupils, governors and the wider community that the school is in the right hands to continue to thrive. Your work builds on the success of the previous headteacher who developed a strong team of staff. You rightly identify this as a strength of her leadership and a very positive asset to the school.
- Since the previous inspection, pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics have shown considerable variation. As we discussed, this is due to equally wide variations in pupils' individual starting points and to the unusually large proportion of pupils who enter the school other than at the usual time,

particularly in upper key stage 2. This, together with very small numbers in each cohort, means that historic information frequently distorts the very real progress pupils make as they move through the school. Leaders are not complacent, however, and make every effort to help new starters settle swiftly into school and make good progress from their own starting points.

- During the inspection, I checked on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in phonics. Leaders rightly identified that the outcomes from the Year 1 phonics checks over the last three years have been too low. Consequently, you have raised expectations and put into place a range of appropriate plans and interventions which are already paying dividends. Current pupils in the school are making good progress in phonics and build on this to become confident and fluent readers early in key stage 1. They say that they enjoy reading in school and at home.
- Pupils can practise their writing skills across the curriculum and do so successfully. This is an area that has improved since the last inspection. Pupils in key stage 1, for example, contribute to an attractive display of their work on rhyming couplets that show a high level of maturity for their ages. Pupils in key stage 2 produce good amounts of writing for a wide range of purposes, for example writing persuasive letters or fantasy stories that grab and keep the interest of the reader. Most-able pupils are encouraged to extend the range of their vocabulary and to use an increasingly complex range of punctuation and grammar to add to the effectiveness of their writing.
- Pupils take pride in their written work and their presentation is usually neat and tidy. However, older pupils do not consistently join their handwriting. We agreed that this is an area that needs to be tackled quickly so that pupils can reach the required standards for greater depth in writing by the time they are ready to move on to secondary school.
- Pupils also deepen their understanding of mathematics. In key stage 2, for example, pupils are encouraged to develop their understanding of half-turns and quarter-turns into right-angles, while older pupils successfully calculate missing angles in a complex range of shapes.
- Children in Reception learn alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2. They enjoy being part of the school family and have good support for developing their skills in reading, writing and mathematics. However, you rightly identify that they need better learning through play. The outdoor space is limited but you plan to make better use of this by providing more resources for 'messy' play and exploring nature.
- Pupils behave well and are a credit to your school. They are polite, well-mannered and keen to learn. Those who spoke to me said that there is not one thing they would change about their school. They spoke proudly to me of the school's values of love, friendship, forgiveness, respect, humility and trust.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- provision for children in Reception gives them enough opportunities for active play, particularly in the outdoors
- pupils learn to join their handwriting from the earliest possible stage in the school and do so consistently in key stage 2.

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. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Janette Corlett  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this short inspection, I met with you and with five members of the governing body. I spoke to a representative of the local authority. You and I visited classes to observe learning and we looked at work in pupils' books. I met with a group of seven pupils at lunchtime and spoke to 11 parents at the school gates. I considered three free text comments made by parents. I also considered the three responses to the online staff questionnaire and 10 responses to the pupil questionnaire. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including that relating to assessment, school self-evaluation, school improvement planning, attendance, the single central record and other safeguarding procedures and practices.