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Mrs Fiona Parr  
Headteacher  
Rothley Church of England Primary Academy  
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Rothley  
Leicester  
Leicestershire  
LE7 7RZ

Dear Mrs Parr

### **Short inspection of Rothley Church of England Primary Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 10 May 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in May 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Pupils' outcomes have been high at the end of both key stages 1 and 2 in most years since the previous inspection, in all subjects. In 2015, however, outcomes fell at the end of key stage 2, particularly in mathematics and in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Leaders have taken swift action to deal with this and current information about pupils' achievements shows that pupils are making better progress now in these subjects. Pupils' still misspell too many words, however, that they should know. You have already identified this issue and are reviewing how you teach spelling.

Pupils enjoy their new school, behave well and take pride in their work. Their books are well presented and pupils take care to correct mistakes to improve their work. The pupils learn about the school's values and understand them well. In addition, pupils have a good knowledge of different cultures and religions. For example, earlier in the school year, dancers from Palestine performed in front of the pupils. As a result of the curriculum, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

The curriculum is well planned and exciting and, consequently, pupils make good progress. For example, children in the early years learn about the life cycle of frogs, and older pupils study the Arctic tundra and the Shang Dynasty, in order to extend their geographical skills and historical knowledge. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons and achieve well.

Pupils' writing has been improving steadily over the past three years. Pupils make particularly good progress with their writing in the early years, in key stage 1 and in Year 6. In other year groups, pupils are given too few opportunities to write at length across the curriculum, in order to develop their writing composition skills. As a result, this slows their progress.

At the previous inspection, inspectors praised the pupils for their excellent behaviour and their attainment, and the staff for their teamwork. Inspectors suggested, however, involving pupils more in the assessment of their work. Scrutiny of pupils' work during this inspection showed that pupils do review their work and correct their errors, which helps them improve.

At the previous inspection, inspectors also asked the school to develop the roles and responsibilities of all leaders, and to engage more effectively with parents and carers to ensure that their ideas and concerns are understood and considered. Middle leaders within the school are effective in leading their areas of responsibility and, as a result, the quality of teaching is good and pupils are making good progress through the school. The large majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, feel that the school responds well to concerns that they raise.

Although disadvantaged pupils have achieved well in the early years and in key stage 1, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others has widened in mathematics and reading by the end of key stage 2. I have asked you and your team to review which strategies have the most impact for improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils, in order to close the achievement gap.

Furthermore, I have asked you to review the school improvement plan. The plan identifies the priorities to improve pupils' outcomes. The success criteria are not, however, always sharp enough to judge if actions taken have been successful or not.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school has effective systems in place to safeguard pupils. Good induction arrangements for new staff and volunteers ensure that the school's safeguarding policies and procedures are well known and applied. The family liaison teacher has good links with social care and medical professionals, in order to meet the needs of potentially vulnerable children. The checks on staff suitability to work with children are up to date. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements and records are detailed and securely stored.

The school tracks pupils' attendance closely, and informs parents and offers support if a pupil's attendance falls. As a result, attendance is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online. Responses to the pupil survey showed that the vast majority of pupils say that, if bullying happens, teachers are good at resolving it. Pupils in the smaller group, to whom I spoke, however, said that bullying does not always stop after a teacher has intervened. You and your team agreed to review anti-bullying procedures. For potentially vulnerable pupils, there are specific action plans to support a child's welfare and progress at school. I have asked you to ensure that all targets in the action plans have a time limit, so that they can be reviewed more regularly and updated more frequently, when needed.

### **Inspection findings**

- You and your deputy promote continuous professional development for all staff. You lead by example and many staff are undertaking externally accredited courses to develop their teaching skills. Consequently, there is a strong culture of everyone being a learner, not just the pupils. As a result, the quality of teaching is at least good and sometimes better.
- You have successfully managed the move to the new school building, from which pupils and staff now benefit. The pupils told me excitedly about the games they can play at lunchtime, when the weather is dry.
- Pupils' safety is of paramount importance and most parents have welcomed the new system for pupils coming into school in the mornings to alleviate the congestion on the roads.
- Leaders have taken swift and effective action to deal with the underachievement at the end of key stage 2 in 2015.
- The deputy headteacher, who is a mathematics specialist, has led extensive staff training to help the staff to build more problem-solving and reasoning activities into lessons, in order to develop pupils' mathematical skills and knowledge. Evidence from pupils' work shows that pupils are regularly challenged by their teachers and pupils told me they enjoy mathematics because of the challenge in lessons. The school's tracking information shows that, as a result, most pupils are making good progress with their mathematics.
- There has also been a strong focus to improve pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling skills this year. Consequently, pupils are using a variety of grammatical techniques in their writing and punctuating their sentences well. Not all pupils, however, are spelling words correctly that they should know.
- Pupils' writing composition by the end of Year 6 has improved steadily in the last three years. Pupils get off to a good start in the early years, where they make good progress from writing their names in foam in the Nursery to writing full sentences in the Reception Year. For example, one child wrote, 'The ladybird heard a purring cat chasing lots of chickens.'
- In key stage 1, pupils learn to punctuate their sentences well and continue to make good progress.
- In Year 6, pupils write a range of extended pieces across the curriculum and as a result, they make rapid progress, particularly the boys.

- In other year groups in key stage 2, pupils have too few opportunities to write at length to build up their stamina for writing and consequently their progress slows.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils compared with other pupils nationally has been good in the early years and through key stage 1. At the end of the Reception Year, disadvantaged pupils have achieved a good level of development, which is above, or broadly in line with, that of other pupils nationally.
- In the phonics check in Year 1, disadvantaged pupils have achieved above other pupils nationally for the past three years.
- In 2015, at the end of key stage 1, disadvantaged pupils achieved above other pupils nationally for all subjects.
- By the end of key stage 2 in 2015, however, the gaps had widened between disadvantaged pupils and others in reading and mathematics. Current school tracking information shows gaps are closing in all year groups in key stage 2, although fewer disadvantaged pupils are on track to be above age-related expectations in reading compared with their classmates. I have asked you to identify which strategies improve the progress faster for disadvantaged pupils and use them to best effect, in order to close the remaining gaps.
- Governors have a wide range of skills and knowledge and carry out their leadership role well. They have a good understanding of how well the school is performing against other schools nationally, and challenge and support leaders to improve the school further. Governors visit the school regularly and speak to staff and pupils, in order to gather first-hand information about how the school is doing.
- The success criteria, by which leaders and governors judge if the actions they have taken have been successful, are, however, not sharp enough. As a result, it is not always clear if the actions taken have improved the outcomes for pupils.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers and learning support assistants are passionate about making sure that lessons support pupils to achieve to their full potential. Adults check pupils' reading abilities closely, by monitoring pupils' reading ages together with their comprehension skills. As a result, they ensure that pupils are reading books at the correct level of challenge. An audit of the school's reading books has been undertaken. Leaders have purchased more books, particularly for the least able pupils, to inspire them to read more. Consequently, most pupils are making good progress with their reading.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Both core and foundation subjects are taught well. Scrutiny of pupils' work in a range of subjects showed good progress.
- Pupils benefit from a sports coach who teaches physical education (PE) every week to the pupils. Staff observe the lessons to develop their own teaching for PE. Consequently, pupils' attainment in PE is high.
- In addition, pupils in Year 3 were learning enthusiastically about ostinato rhythms in a music lesson. In Year 5, pupils were involved in planning a science experiment to investigate the absorbency of different materials and studying the different variables involved.

- Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors, eager to share their learning. Pupils line up for assembly well and work hard in lessons. They have respect for people who may have different lifestyles from their own and demonstrate tolerance of all. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' writing ability improves further, by ensuring that there are more opportunities for pupils to write at length, to develop their writing skills across the curriculum, and by increasing their ability to spell age-appropriate words
- the success criteria in the school improvement plan are sharper, so that leaders and governors can check if the actions they take have been effective or not
- the remaining gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others close quickly, by identifying which strategies improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils at a faster rate and making fully effective use of them.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Finch  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met you, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the leaders of assessment, the early years and English, and the family liaison teacher. I spoke with parents and observed pupils at break time. I met with a group of pupils from both key stages 1 and 2. I visited every classroom with you, or your deputy, and we looked at pupils' work. I met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. You and I reviewed records about keeping children safe and about pupils' behaviour and attendance. I studied your school improvement plan, subject action plans and your self-evaluation. I looked at your documents relating to performance management and your evaluations of teaching and learning. I considered the 121 responses to Parent View, the 118 responses to the Ofsted free text service, the 46 responses to the pupil survey and the 29 responses to the staff survey.