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Mr Anthony Harpham  
Headteacher  
Walton Primary Academy  
The Grove  
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Dear Mr Harpham

### **Short inspection of Walton Primary Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in September 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. After a period of staffing changes you now have a much more stable leadership team with the range of skills needed to continue to drive improvement. You have created a positive learning culture within the staff team by sharing responsibilities, increasing accountability and giving staff opportunities to develop their leadership skills. As a result, staff morale is high and together you take collective responsibility for pupils' outcomes. Standards at the end of the early years and in the Year 1 phonics screening check have continued to rise over the last few years. By the end of key stage 2, pupils make progress in line with national averages over time in reading, writing and mathematics. However, you have rightly identified that a priority for leaders is to improve progress further still, especially for boys in key stage 1, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

At the previous inspection, leaders were challenged to improve subject leadership and increase accountability for standards and progress. Although subject leaders are relatively new to post, they are already having a positive impact on teaching and learning due to the high quality of support and training they receive through the trust. You have ensured that subject leaders have developed the skills to check the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on pupils' outcomes. This has led to them accurately identifying and then implementing actions to bring about further improvement. Evidence in pupils' books and in lessons shows that subject leaders'

actions are resulting in greater consistency in teaching approaches and that the adaptations made to the curriculum are securing improving outcomes for pupils.

You ensure that the progress of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, is carefully tracked. The senior leadership team has developed an assessment information system which is enabling leaders to identify groups and individuals who are falling behind. This earlier identification means that leaders are responding quickly and working with teachers to plan how to address any gaps in pupils' learning. Assessment information shows that pupils' outcomes are improving and an even greater proportion of pupils are set to meet and exceed the end-of-key-stage expectations. The next step is for you to develop more robust procedures to evaluate the impact of actions to improve outcomes for pupil groups. Governors can then use such information to more productively hold leaders to account and to ensure that funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is targeted as effectively as possible.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and the governing body have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed, clear and up to date. Robust systems are in place for the recruitment and induction of new staff. The training that staff receive means they are effective in recognising and responding to signs of concern. Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school.

Pupils say they feel safe and well looked after. They have complete faith that adults in the school will listen to them if they are worried at all. Pupils do not feel that bullying is an issue. They are confident that any rare issues of poor behaviour are dealt with firmly and fairly through the consequence system which has been recently introduced. The curriculum provides opportunities to support children in being safe and consequently pupils talk confidently about how to stay safe, for example, when they are online, crossing the road or riding a bicycle.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders and teachers actively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. This is exemplified by the way in which pupils are confident to share their ideas and justify their opinions, which is further supported by their involvement in the school council and the academy trust parliament. Pupils show respect for each other and have excellent attitudes to their learning. They particularly enjoy the challenge they receive in lessons and are pleased that teachers do not give them the correct answer if they are stuck, but instead support them to reach the answer themselves.
- The trust provides rigorous support and challenge to leaders. The regular meetings with the school improvement officer are supporting your school self-evaluation which is becoming more precise and accurate as a result. The peer review in the autumn term gave leaders suggestions for improvement which you acted on immediately; this is already improving the quality of teaching which

pupils receive. Subject leaders have also benefited from the subject network meetings and training through the trust which have strengthened leadership at all levels.

- The structure of the governing body has been redesigned and is quickly developing. A skills audit and action plan have resulted in governors being assigned roles and responsibilities related to their areas of expertise. Where skills have been lacking, the trust has provided specific training and new governor appointments have been selected in order to strengthen the skills of the team. This is resulting in the governing body being more able to provide greater challenge to leaders. However, leaders do not yet share information about pupil outcomes with governors in a consistent enough way to enable them to hold leaders rigorously to account.
- As a result of precise assessment information, higher expectations and improved consistency in the quality of teaching, current pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is evidenced in lessons and in pupils' books where pupils demonstrate the impact of leaders' actions; for example, in the use of reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics. Pupils are challenged well in lessons and respond enthusiastically with excellent attitudes to their learning. Consequently, the most able pupils are reaching the higher standards they are capable of.
- In key stage 1, leaders are aware that boys have not made as much progress in recent years. However, actions taken to adapt the curriculum to interest boys are starting to take effect and current key stage 1 pupils are making better progress. Where pupils are not on track to meet the expectation at the end of key stage 1, leaders are working closely with teachers to ensure that pupils are catching up as quickly as possible.
- The small proportion of disadvantaged pupils did not make as much progress as other pupils nationally in 2016. However, improved assessment systems mean that pupils are now identified much sooner if they are falling behind. Tailored support provided through the pupil premium funding and increased consistency in teaching are resulting in better progress for current disadvantaged pupils. A greater proportion of disadvantaged pupils, in line with the national average for other pupils, are now on track to meet the expected standard by the end of key stage 2.
- Improved leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities means that pupils are quickly and accurately identified and are receiving targeted support to meet their needs. Although these pupils are making progress towards their personal targets, leaders now need to more accurately measure and increase the impact that the provision is having on their progress compared to all pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Attendance is above the national average and the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent is below the national average. However, for disadvantaged pupils, there is a greater proportion who are regularly absent. This issue affects a small number of families and a range of actions are taken to improve attendance, with varying success. You agree that more could be done to improve attendance

of these pupils by analysing the impact of the strategies used to enable the most effective ones to be selected for each individual.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- consistent recording and reporting systems are developed to support leaders in evaluating the impact of strategies to improve pupils' outcomes
- governors hold leaders to account more tenaciously for the difference leaders' actions make to pupils' progress, especially for boys in key stage 1, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Godfrey  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, senior leaders, subject leaders, five members of the governing body and a representative from the multi-academy trust. I evaluated documentation including: the school improvement plan; information about pupils' progress; governing body minutes; attendance and behaviour records; and information about safeguarding. I spoke with a range of parents and carers and considered responses from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. We visited every classroom together to observe teaching and learning and we spoke to pupils and scrutinised their work.