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Mrs Webb
Executive Principal
Cherry Tree Academy Trust Marham Infant
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Dear Mrs Webb

Short inspection of Cherry Tree Academy Trust Marham Infant

Following my visit to the school on 16 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since 2014, the school has worked in partnership with the junior school forming the Cherry Tree Academy Trust, with you as executive principal of both schools. You and your governors, who are also the trustees, rightly say that this partnership has brought benefit to both schools. Many of the pupils at both schools are drawn from the local airbase. The partnership has strengthened your links with the base and enabled greater continuity for pupils. It has provided opportunities for you to develop staff expertise by working with different age groups and to develop the leadership skills of less experienced staff so that you 'grow your own' leaders effectively. This has maintained a good quality of education for the infants, despite staffing changes. You and your trustees are forward-looking and are carefully considering how to expand the trust further, while maintaining its current strengths.

You continue to provide strong and effective leadership and maintain a highly positive school ethos. This is a school where your motto 'learning, living, laughing' is evident all around. The previous inspection report identified the need to improve standards in reading and writing. You have made sure that this has been addressed so that standards in reading and writing are now at least as good as those found nationally. You have also addressed the previous inspection issue of promoting pupils' cultural development. You make sure that pupils learn about the wider world,

drawing on their own experiences, as many have lived in other countries. As a result, pupils understand about diversity and demonstrate respect for others.

You check on teaching regularly and provide staff with clear and unambiguous feedback to help them develop their professional skills. Staff appreciate the support they receive, including those who are new to the profession. One such teacher commented: 'This is my NQT year and I feel that I have had the best possible start to my teaching career due to the support of all of the staff at this school.' All staff who responded to Ofsted's staff questionnaire said that they are trusted to innovate and that leaders treat them with respect.

Teaching is good because you and other leaders set out your expectations of staff, including those at the start of their careers, very clearly. Staff work together in effective teams and share good practice on a daily basis. They have very positive relationships with pupils and there is a harmonious atmosphere in all classes. Teachers plan interesting lessons. For example, pupils in one class were playing a money game which helped them develop their knowledge of coins in a fun way. Teachers use assessment at the end of lessons well to plan for pupils' next steps. This ensures that any gaps in learning are addressed and contributes to the good progress pupils make. However, teachers do not all use assessment within lessons equally well. Sometimes teachers do not check on the progress pupils are making within lessons soon enough. Consequently, some pupils complete a piece of work without sufficient input during lessons to help them do better and, as a result, do not make the rapid progress they are capable of.

The governors provide good support and challenge for leaders. They know the school well because they visit often and watch learning. They talk with pupils to gather their views of the school and chat with parents informally to identify and address any concerns they may have early on. They rightly have confidence in your leadership but are also prepared to challenge you and other leaders when necessary. For example, governors identified that some summer-born pupils were not achieving well enough and asked you to demonstrate how you are addressing this.

Pupils enjoy their learning. This is reflected in the good rates of attendance for the majority of pupils. Pupils told me about the many things they enjoy about school and how teachers make learning fun. One pupil said: 'This is a lovely school where all the teachers help us (except when we have quizzes to check what we have learned!).' Pupils behave very well in lessons and outside. They are polite and courteous and very willing to speak with adults about their learning. Many pupils independently offered to talk to me about their work and to explain what they were learning about, showing real pride in their achievements. Pupils that I spoke to during the inspection said that behaviour is good in school and that it is unusual for anyone to be 'really naughty'. Pupils are knowledgeable about what bullying is and say that it rarely happens at the school. This is because teachers and pupils respect each other and all know the school's 'golden rules'.

The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire also said

that behaviour in school is good. This good behaviour reflects the strong focus that leaders maintain on developing well-rounded and caring individuals.

Parents are highly appreciative of the work you and all your staff do to help their children. Comments typical of those received are, 'The headteacher is fantastic; her leadership and professionalism shine through' and, 'My child has blossomed... the teachers are a credit to the school.' Because of the high proportion of service families in school, you and your staff are very conscious of the need to ensure that those pupils who arrive at the school settle quickly into their learning. You have good systems for ensuring that this happens. As a result, you and your staff establish good relationships with parents, who trust and support the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Keeping pupils safe has a high priority at Cherry Tree Academy. You and your team make sure that pupils trust staff and feel able to talk with them about concerns. Your pastoral support worker also works with pupils specifically when they seem worried, for example by making 'worry tubes'. Consequently, pupils told me that there is always someone to talk to if they are upset or worried. You and your staff are vigilant for signs that a child may be at risk and follow up concerns rigorously with outside agencies when needed. You ensure that all staff training is fully up to date, including for any staff that join the school mid-year. You make sure that checks on staff are carried out carefully, in line with national requirements.

You and your team of designated professionals regularly review all concerns about pupils together, so that there is a system in place to ensure that nothing gets overlooked that may place a child at risk. You teach pupils how to keep themselves safe online and have held sessions for parents about safety when using the internet and other technologies. However, you are conscious that you need to continue to work with pupils and parents so that they know what to do to keep safe online.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we identified the progress of boys in reading and writing as an inspection trail to investigate. This was because, in the past, boys in the early years have lagged behind girls in reading and writing and in Year 2 boys have not done as well as girls.
- You and your subject leaders told me how you have modified the curriculum so that it is more engaging for all pupils, including boys. Teachers told me how they plan topic work from areas of pupils' interest and that they link this to the reading and writing that are done in English lessons.
- In the early years, I saw boys happily reading outside and developing their skills well. Another group of boys were looking at insects and an adult encouraged them to write down what they were finding, which they did willingly.
- Together we looked at examples of pupils' writing across the school in English books and in topic books. I also talked with subject leaders for reading and writing about the current achievement of boys, as shown by the school's own

assessments. This evidence demonstrates that boys are making good progress relative to their starting points. However, spelling and punctuation for some pupils, including some boys, are not good enough to enable them to achieve the higher standard in writing that they are capable of.

- We agreed that leaders for reading and writing do not look closely enough at the progress of pupils, and specifically of boys, from their starting points and do not know where boys are making more rapid progress. Consequently, they are not able to use this to refine their plans for improvement.
- A second area we looked at during the inspection was the progress of pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This was because published information about these groups relates to very small numbers of pupils and does not give a clear picture of how well the school meets their needs.
- The leader for special educational needs tracks the achievement of each pupil very carefully. She draws on a range of information, including the school's assessment information, intervention outcomes, discussions with staff, pupils' targets and pupils' books, to know that these pupils make good progress.
- The provision of in-school speech and language support, together with fast-track access to occupational therapy, ensures that pupils who have specific needs have these addressed through early intervention. This means that barriers to learning are overcome swiftly.
- Good systems are in place to ensure that information from additional support groups is passed back to class teachers so that they know what pupils have learned and where they need to go next. As a result, support in class and in small groups helps these pupils to make good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those for whom pupil premium funding is provided (which includes service children) are well catered for. As a large proportion of the school is eligible for this funding, your decision to use some of this to have small-group and one-to-one support has had a positive impact and, as a result, these pupils make good progress.
- The most able disadvantaged pupils make good progress because you ensure that these pupils are also given additional support and challenge. For example, you set up a 'most-able writers' group for pupils in Year 2.
- A third area we looked at was the progress pupils make in other subjects, such as history and science. You and your team showed me how the curriculum is planned from pupils' interests but how teachers also carefully map the curriculum against national curriculum requirements to ensure that pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the curriculum and about 'Fab Fridays' when they do lots of outdoor learning, which provides an opportunity for pupils to apply their skills in different contexts.
- Assessments and pupils' books show that pupils make good progress, for example in science, because they are given lots of opportunities to explore the wider world and to carry out investigations.

- At the start of the inspection, you asked me to look specifically at the school's pastoral care for pupils. You rightly feel that this is a strength of the school. You ensure that all staff share a strong commitment to working with parents and pupils within a mobile community. This ensures that mobility does not have a negative impact on pupils' learning.
- You are also aware of the impact of mobility on those pupils who stay right through school but regularly lose friends who move away. You work with all pupils to ensure that they know when changes are imminent and that they are well prepared emotionally to deal with these.
- You employ a parent support adviser who works with parents and pupils to meet pupils' social and emotional needs. This work is effective in ensuring that pupils are better able to access learning.
- Parents are very appreciative of leaders 'going the extra mile' to work with them in, sometimes, very difficult and challenging circumstances, for example long-term parental absence. One parent commented, 'The pastoral care is second to none, which is so important to service families.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of spelling and punctuation improves so that more pupils achieve greater depth in their writing
- middle leaders check more closely on the progress that pupils are making from their starting points and use this information to sharpen and refine their plans for improvement
- teachers identify errors or misconceptions promptly within lessons to help pupils make more rapid progress.

I am copying this letter to the executive board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Maria Curry
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, with subject leaders and with two trustees. I met with a group of pupils from Reception and Years 1 and 2. I scrutinised a range of documents, including information on pupils' progress, safeguarding, development planning and the school's self-evaluation. I visited all classes and evaluated pupils' work. I checked the school's website and found it to meet requirements on the publication of specified information.