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Miss Victoria Hulme
Head of School
Haughton St Giles Church of England Primary Academy
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Dear Miss Hulme

Short inspection of Haughton St Giles Church of England Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 27 February 2018, 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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The current quality of teaching is effective, and pupils work hard and enjoy school. You and other leaders have a clear understanding of how to improve the school further.

However, it has not all been plain sailing. There was a period when the school was without a permanent headteacher. This caused some disruption to routines, slowed the pace of improvement following the previous inspection and was unsettling for staff, parents and carers, and pupils. In addition, pupils' progress across key stage 2 slipped.

More recently, however, things have improved and there is a renewed local confidence in the school. Parents who responded to Parent View and those who spoke with me during this inspection explained that the school had been through a difficult time but was now heading in the right direction. Indeed, the recent responses on Parent View show that the majority of respondents would recommend the school to others.

A key driver for these improvements has been your leadership. Since your appointment in 2017, you have brought stability, ambition and a sense of optimism to all aspects of school improvement. The support and guidance provided by the executive headteacher have also been very helpful. Together, you have made

changes for the better. The school has now turned a corner and is on the up.

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 were above national figures and current pupils are continuing to do well. Your clear-sighted leadership and willingness to seek and act on advice have resulted in improvements in many areas, including teaching, assessment, and pupils' progress and behaviour. Governors, too, have put systems in place to ensure that they receive reliable information and understand their roles and responsibilities.

However, you know that there is still plenty of work to be done. Aspects of early years provision and further refinements to whole-school assessment are key development priorities. You also know that constructive support, guidance and challenge for staff and leaders at all levels must continue in order to get the best from everyone. All of this features on your well-informed school development plan.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Even when the school was going through a period of change, with different staff coming and going, pupils' safety and welfare matters were attended to correctly.

All the proper checks on staff and visitors are carried out and records relating to staff and pupils are stored securely. Pupils who need medication at school have access to it when needed and leaders are quick to respond to professional advice when it is given. First-aid arrangements, site safety measures and emergency routines are in place and understood by staff and pupils. Unexplained pupil absences are followed up promptly.

In the staff room, there is a safeguarding notice board that is kept up to date with relevant guidance. Staff also receive regular training about the risks pupils can face and what to do should they detect any warning signs. When you have had a concern about a pupil's safety or well-being, you have followed the correct procedures. In all such matters, you ensure that the right information is shared in the right way at the right time.

Inspection findings

- In the years that followed the previous inspection, the school had rather mixed fortunes. In 2016, the school was without a permanent headteacher and parents grew concerned about the lack of visible leadership. Academic standards, which are usually in line with, or above, national figures, also slipped in 2016. In response to growing concerns, the governors and multi-academy trust eventually took action. This resulted in your appointment and the appointment of an executive headteacher to oversee much-needed improvements.
- Since your appointment in 2017, you have done a lot. You have managed to unite staff, both new and long-serving, and have injected a sense of ambitious purpose to school improvement. Parents now express high levels of satisfaction

with the school's work and are pleased with recent changes. Inspection evidence confirms that parents' renewed confidence in the school is well founded.

- Over time, children have done well in early years and the Year 1 class, although girls have made more progress than boys. You are aware of this and are looking to improve aspects of early years practice. This year, there have been changes to the early years team which show much promise. You know that more support is needed in order to develop day-to-day teaching and ensure that classroom resources are used to best effect. During this inspection, for example, some of the older children were doing some writing inspired by Monet's art. It was a well-chosen activity and the art gave children plenty of ideas, but they did not have the right resources to help them with their work. This limited their choice of words and, therefore, their writing.
- That said, as pupils move up through key stage 1, they acquire the necessary literacy and numeracy skills and their performance in recent national assessments has been impressive. In the Year 1 phonics screening check, for instance, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard for their age was well above average in both 2016 and 2017. Further on, at the end of Year 2, pupils' results in the reading, writing and mathematics assessments have been above average year after year.
- It is when pupils move into key stage 2 that academic results present a more complicated picture. In most years, apart from 2016, standards at the end of key stage 2 have compared favourably with national figures. However, progress measures across key stage 2 have not presented such a positive picture. This inspection found several reasons for this. First, a proportion of pupils enter the school during key stage 2, so the pupils assessed at the end of Year 6 have not been exactly the same group of pupils as those assessed at the end of Year 2. Second, assessment across the school, including in key stage 1, has not been wholly reliable in the past. Third, teaching in key stage 2 has had some ups and downs. It is difficult to know which of these factors has had the greatest effect on progress measures, but, to a greater or lesser extent, all have played a part.
- As for current pupils, however, it is clear that they are doing well and, in the majority of cases, are making good progress. You and your team have improved assessment so that you are properly informed about the effectiveness of teaching. In turn, you are able to ensure that governors are properly informed too. For their part, governors now make sure that they ask the right questions so they get the right information and understand the school's performance. You know that there is still more to be done to refine assessment, but you are on the right track and all staff understand what is expected from them.
- Teaching in key stage 2, particularly in upper key stage 2, is pitched just right for pupils' learning needs. Not only that, but teaching staff manage pupils' behaviour in a very positive and upbeat way. Consequently, pupils grow in confidence. They are not afraid to make mistakes and develop into self-assured learners who are keen to share their opinions and ideas. Furthermore, displays such as 'our best work' help to lift expectations and generate a pride in achievements.
- Nevertheless, there are times when teaching is not so successful. On occasions, teaching assistants speak loudly when the teacher is talking to the class. This is

distracting for pupils and has the potential to create bad habits. At other times, teaching is not suitably attentive to pupils' careless errors in their work. Other inspection evidence indicates that these things do not happen often but, if left unchecked, such minor shortcomings can grow. You have plans to make sure that the most effective practice is shared more widely so that all can learn from it.

- Even when the school was going through a difficult time, pupils' attendance remained above average. Pupils who spoke with me explained that they enjoy school and that lessons are interesting. They also like the sense of friendly competition provided by the four house teams, named after Olympic athletes. Indeed, the values promoted through the Olympics chime with the school's Christian foundation and values, such as respect, responsibility and forgiveness. During this inspection, pupils' behaviour demonstrated a clear understanding of the meaning of respect. In class, they are attentive and conscientious. At less formal times, such as lunch- or breaktimes, they get along well with one another and willingly help out when necessary. Almost all pupils arrive on time in the mornings, and they look smart and are ready to learn.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- provide sufficient support and challenge for staff and leaders at all levels in order to maintain ongoing school improvement
- provide training and support in early years to ensure that resources and the learning environment are used to best effect to support children's learning
- continue to refine assessment so that all staff, leaders and governors are suitably informed about pupils' progress and attainment
- share and learn from the most effective teaching in this school, notably in upper key stage 2, and in other schools.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of West Stafford Multi-Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Lichfield, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Martin Pye
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, other members of your leadership team and the teaching staff. I also met with two governors and the chief executive officer of West Stafford Multi-Academy Trust. I carried out short observations of teaching in all classes, observed part of an assembly and looked at pupils' work in books and on display. I talked with pupils in lessons and at lunchtime. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.

I paid particular attention to several key lines of enquiry. These included: progress since the previous inspection; pupils' achievement and attendance; safeguarding; and the impact of leadership and management.

By the end of the inspection, there were 33 recent responses on Parent View and 15 written comments. I took account of these responses and also considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires. I looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own evaluation of its performance; improvement plans; records relating to the work of governors; several external reports about the school; pupils' records; and several school policy documents. I also checked the school's website and the procedures for keeping pupils safe.