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Mrs Corisande Bateman
Chantry Primary Academy
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Dear Mrs Bateman

Short inspection of Chantry Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 13 March 2018 with Her Majesty's Inspector Henry Weir, 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 February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

You and your leaders have worked tirelessly to raise standards and improve pupils' outcomes, as demonstrated in last year's end-of-year and current pupils' achievement information.

Chantry Primary Academy promotes inclusion and pupil well-being extremely well. Pastoral support and nurture are at the heart of the school. Your core values for 'learning for life' are demonstrated through the resilience and independence you help build within your pupils. Pupils with complex needs are fully supported and integrated into mainstream school. This includes pupils who are visually impaired, who thrive in the school's nurturing and supportive ethos and make good progress from their starting points. Additionally, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good and better progress from their starting points. Where complex medical conditions prevent these pupils from attending school as regularly as they should, leaders were able to provide evidence that they are supported fully to catch up in their learning.

Your inclusive ethos extends beyond your school and into the community. This is particularly the case in the support you provide for schools and families within the wider community. Staff work exceptionally well at carrying out the much-needed care and nurture for pupils who have social, emotional and mental-health needs.

These pupils receive the precise and targeted support they need to be able to continue their learning in mainstream school.

You recognise that pupils' attendance remains a priority. Your strong pastoral and well-being team works successfully with pupils and families to ensure that they get the support they need to be able to attend school regularly. Pupils told me about the importance of learning to read. Work in pupils' books shows that teachers make opportunities to discuss the importance of school. For example, pupils wrote about the reasons why school is the best place to educate children. Pupils' attendance is now broadly in line with the national average and you have reduced the number of persistent absences to below the national average.

The school environment is bright and inviting. Displays are engaging and showcase pupils' work from across a broad range of subjects. Classroom environments are consistent across all year groups and reflect your high expectations of teachers and pupils. They are well resourced, with helpful prompts to support pupils' prior learning.

Pupils are polite and respectful towards each other and adults in the school. They talk enthusiastically about the range of different sports the school offers and the extra-curricular activities the school provides. The inspection team was fortunate to hear the skilled and tuneful choir practising after school.

You and your leaders have shown great determination and commitment to improving pupils' achievement over time. This was particularly noticeable in the results at the end of key stage 2 in 2017. The progress of pupils in reading at the end of key stage 2 was above average for all pupils, including those who were disadvantaged. Progress for disadvantaged pupils improved year on year and, in 2017, was in the top 20% of schools nationally for reading and mathematics. In addition, their attainment was in line with other pupils nationally at expected standards.

The vast majority of parents and carers recognise the effectiveness of the leadership team and commented positively about it on Ofsted's online free-text facility. One parent, reflecting the views of many, said, 'The leadership team and mentoring team at Chantry are wonderful, supportive and engaging at every level.'

You and your leadership team, including governors, have worked well to address the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report, particularly regarding pupils being given opportunities to improve their work. There is a consistent approach across all year groups in the way teachers and pupils interact through teaching and learning. Teachers regularly provide next steps for learning.

You, your leaders and governors continually monitor and evaluate the school's work. You have an accurate view of the school and the actions needed to improve further, demonstrated in the school's self-evaluation and development plan. Rigorous systems are in place to track, assess and monitor pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils identified as not on track are immediately

supported and taught in small groups to catch up. This urgency has ensured that some pupils make rapid progress in key stages 1 and 2.

The school's creative curriculum ensures that there is good coverage of subjects such as geography, science and history. Middle subject leaders have begun to develop systems to monitor and evaluate accurately these subjects against national curriculum expectations. However, you acknowledge that there is still more work for you and subject leaders to do in terms of assessing subjects in the same rigorous way that you and your leaders assess English and mathematics, in order to raise standards further.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture throughout the school. You and your governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Checks on all employees' suitability to work with children are complete, records of concern show chronology and actions are timely.

Staff and governors have had the relevant safeguarding training and governors carry out additional checks on the single central record and on how well staff understand keeping children safe in education. In addition, the strong well-being team ensures that pupils are supported to feel safe at all times. One parent commented, 'Chantry has proved to be a very caring environment and our children look forward to going to school.'

Pupils are given valuable opportunities to help make a difference to pupils who may struggle at times to make friends. Some are trained by learning mentors to support vulnerable pupils, especially at breaktimes and lunchtimes. The calming 'rainbow room' offers a quiet place for vulnerable pupils to settle and speak with an adult should they need to.

You have put much in place to promote good behaviour. Expectations of behaviour are high and pupils understand and follow the systems in place. Pupils told me that bullying is rare and the 'sunshine room' is a place for pupils to reflect on their actions should they break school rules. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They know the high expectations teachers set and make the most of learning time. All staff said that pupils are safe and the vast majority of parents agreed.

Inspection findings

- In order to ascertain whether the school remains good, I followed a number of key lines of enquiry. I wanted to check the quality of teaching and learning in key stage 1. This was because the previous inspection report stated that handwriting and presentation skills were not developed well.
- Pupils' work and observing pupils in lessons showed that pupils take great pride in their work, from Reception to Year 6. Work in pupils' books is well presented. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 concentrate on practising forming letters correctly and

have mastered a secure pencil grip developed early in the Reception class. Pupils write for purpose and at length. Most pupils use the expected punctuation accurately, including speech marks in their longer writing tasks.

- I also wanted to check on the challenge provided for key stage 1 pupils, particularly for the most able, in order for them to reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2017, the proportion of pupils who reached greater depth was below the national average. However, there is much evidence to show that current pupils in key stage 1 are given opportunities to reach greater depth. In Year 1, for example, learning is organised to ensure that all pupil groups have sufficient support and challenge. In lessons observed, while some pupils were supported to write sentences, others were constructing descriptive stories independently. New learning was evident.
- Challenge for most-able pupils was also an area for improvement highlighted in the previous inspection report. However, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher standards at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 was in line with the national average.
- Current pupils' work shows that they are supported to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers' small-group targeted support picks up pupils' misconceptions immediately so that they can be addressed and learning can move on rapidly. These groups have been pivotal in improving outcomes for pupils.
- Robust information showing where pupils are in their learning means that teachers can take account of pupils' starting points to match activities accordingly. In Year 6, I observed a group of the most able pupils starting an activity earlier in the lesson than some others who needed more explanation. Pupils work at a good pace and teachers and additional adults continually assess their learning so that they make the progress they should.
- Pupils needing more opportunities to solve problems in mathematics was an area identified in the previous inspection report. The leader for mathematics was able to talk confidently about the work to address this. Your chosen method for teaching mathematics is consistent across the school. You have researched methods in Japan and have selected and implemented some of the ideas which suit your pupils' needs. Mathematics lessons have pace and structure, which allow pupils to develop their fluency and apply their skills immediately to problem-solving and reasoning activities. Pupils acquire transferable skills and gain a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts. This helps to prepare pupils for secondary school.
- Provision in the early years was my final key line of enquiry. This was because the proportion of children who attained a good level of development at the end of Reception in 2017 was below the national average. There is secure evidence to show that children make good progress from often very low starting points. Progress is evident in children's writing books, which show how mark-making at the beginning of the school year develops into full sentences by now. In some cases, children are able to attempt paragraphs, where words are phonetically spelled and more complex words, such as 'enormous', tried. Number work shows good number formation and children demonstrate sustained interest in activities

within the environment. However, you have acknowledged that more precise support in unstructured sessions outside could move learning on more quickly so that more children, particularly the most able, make the progress of which they are capable and more children achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders of areas within the wider curriculum establish rigorous assessment systems so that they accurately know how well pupils achieve in their respective curriculum subjects
- all adults who work with children in Reception regularly look for opportunities to challenge and stretch children's learning, particularly during unstructured sessions outside, so that all children, particularly the most able, make the progress of which they are capable.

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

Yours sincerely

Cindy Impey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We discussed the key lines of enquiry for this inspection, areas for further improvement and information about current pupils' attainment and progress.

Meetings were held with you, senior leaders and three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. I also met with a representative from the local authority. We spoke with pupils informally and met with the school council. Also, a number of parents were spoken to at the beginning of the school day.

Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined. I gathered a range of evidence to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This included a joint meeting with you and the head of school and meetings with your senior and middle leaders. We looked at a range of pupils' work from across all year groups, subjects and a wide range of pupil abilities.

The views of 98 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, as well as 85 responses parents made using the

free-text service. We also considered the school's own recent parent survey. The 59 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey were also considered to obtain staff views.