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Mrs Joanne Goldsmith
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Dear Mrs Goldsmith

Short inspection of Charles Warren Academy

Following my visit to the school on 20 March 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 June 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since joining the school in September 2017, you have galvanized a determined senior team whose members share your commitment to ensuring that every pupil achieves the best that they can. You have worked in a very focused way with senior leaders and helped them to develop skills to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. All leaders are clear about what the school does well, and what could be even better. They all play an active part in driving forward the school's development.

Governors challenge senior leaders effectively and ask searching questions about the progress that pupils make. They have high expectations of leaders and are not afraid to hold them to account. For example, on a recent day spent in school, governors observed pupils' learning and then confidently questioned you about pupil progress data.

High-quality provision in early years ensures that most children are ready for the Year 1 curriculum. Pupils consistently achieve well in the Year 1 phonics screening check and attainment for pupils at the end of key stage 1 has been in line with, or above, national expectations for three years. Pupils currently in Year 6 have made strong progress from the end of key stage 1 and are well placed to achieve better outcomes when compared to the school's 2017 key stage 2 results. Historically, too few pupils have reached the higher standards by the end of key stage 2. The most able pupils currently in Year 6 are making good progress from their end of key

stage 1 starting points and are well placed to achieve the higher standards they are capable of.

The school's additional resource, known as 'The Provision', supports children in the early years who have little or no speech. This provides a very safe and creative learning environment to support children and their families. You are committed to working with the local authority to develop this resource further so that more children can be helped at an early stage. This is just one example of your determination to meet the needs of each child and provide good-quality care and teaching.

Pupils say that they love coming to school. The school has a larger-than-average proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Some pupils start school speaking no English. However, they make rapid progress because of the effective support of adults and pupils, and because they are made to feel so welcome. One pupil said: 'This school is amazing. When I first arrived I felt uncomfortable, but soon settled in.' Pupils said that they enjoy lessons because they are 'challenging and fun'. One pupil commented: 'Teachers challenge us in lessons to make us think a lot. This inspires me to work harder.'

Most parents and carers are supportive of the school. The majority of parents who responded to the school's own questionnaire and Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, would recommend this school to others.

Leaders have tackled successfully the areas for improvement since the last inspection. Learning is planned well, and teachers provide appropriate challenge for all pupils. An effective example of this was seen in Year 6, where pupils were debating the pros and cons of banning school holidays. They challenged each other's views using clear and concise arguments. You have also ensured that your curriculum includes a range of topics that excite and stimulate pupils. On the day of the inspection, pupils participated enthusiastically in a drumming assembly and other pupils enjoyed taking part in the hula-hoop Sports Relief challenge. The development and enrichment of the curriculum have been tackled with great success.

Your current plans for improvement rightly focus on increasing the proportion of pupils working at the higher standard, particularly by the end of key stage 2. You have already made changes to how you develop pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics, and these improvements are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. You are also working hard to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make faster progress in all areas of learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils feel safe in school and know that if they have any problems an adult will always help them. Leaders have established rigorous systems to ensure that each member of staff understands their role and responsibility for safeguarding pupils. You ensure that full recruitment checks are carried out on everyone who works or

volunteers in school, and governors are thorough in their monitoring of this. Staff, including those new to school, are well trained in safeguarding and child protection procedures. Frequent updates ensure that staff and governors are kept up to date.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection we focused on how leaders' actions are ensuring that more pupils are challenged to achieve the higher standards, particularly in mathematics. We also considered how teaching is helping all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, to make rapid progress.
- Together with subject leaders, you are ensuring that pupils who are capable of achieving the higher standards are given more opportunities to work at greater depth. Teachers now more routinely provide extra challenge and extension tasks in English and mathematics.
- In most subjects, teachers plan learning activities with appropriate stretch and challenge for pupils of different abilities. Work in pupils' books and the progress records of current pupils show that they are responding well to the higher levels of challenge. However, you acknowledge that in some classes pupils are not yet challenged sufficiently in mathematics.
- Together with senior leaders, you rigorously check on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that it is consistently strong across the school. This allows you to identify the most effective practice and those aspects that need to improve. As a result of this, you have prioritised training which is successfully supporting staff and improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- The mathematics leader receives valuable support and challenge from the multi-academy trust's mathematics consultant. She has developed her knowledge and skills and is successfully driving improvements across the school.
- You know that some teachers need support to assess pupils' work accurately, and you are providing effective training and guidance to develop these skills. Improved assessment is enabling teachers to identify sharply where challenge needs to be greater, with the result that more pupils are achieving the higher standards.
- You make sure that disadvantaged pupils receive effective support, and carefully monitor the progress that they make. Your determined focus on making teaching the best it can be is leading to improved rates of progress for some disadvantaged pupils. However, this is not yet consistent across all year groups.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is a consistently high level of challenge in lessons for all pupils, particularly in mathematics
- all teaching supports disadvantaged pupils well, so that they make faster progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Varnom
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the school's social worker, two governors and senior leaders to review your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. Together, we observed learning in a number of classrooms, including the Reception class and the language unit. I spoke to parents and pupils. We scrutinised pupils' work in books as well as your assessment information. I reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance and governors' minutes. I considered the eight responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 12 responses to the staff survey. I checked the effectiveness of your safeguarding arrangements, including those related to recruitment.