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Mrs Sara Yarnold
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Yarnold

Short inspection of Cathedral Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 October 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 April 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since that time, the school has grown considerably in size, increasing from two to 10 classes. Leaders and governors have successfully overseen the school's relocation to a new building, which has been carefully modified to meet the needs of the ever-growing school roll. You have managed the challenges which the school's location presents with the utmost care and diligence so that pupils are kept safe. Furthermore, you have made good use of local facilities, for example by using an outdoor space to provide additional 'forest school' sessions for all classes.

You have maintained the best aspects of the provision since the previous inspection, which includes your inspirational leadership and the strong pastoral care you provide for pupils. One parent commented, 'Staff have a great enthusiasm for all the school values, its history and special qualities.' The staff team are all unreservedly proud to work at Cathedral Primary School and share your high expectations. Working together with the Cathedral Schools Trust, you have provided excellent professional development for staff. As a result, you have built a strong and ambitious leadership team who feel motivated and supported to improve the school even further. Leaders, governors and staff support your ambition to provide a very high standard of education for all at Cathedral Primary School.

Governors are skilled and experienced. They know the school extremely well and hold leaders to account effectively. They use information which leaders provide, as well as external reviews organised by the Cathedral Schools Trust, to make sure that plans for improving the school focus on the correct priorities. Governors work closely with you to make sure that pupils receive a broad and inspiring curriculum and thrive in a caring

environment. They share your determination to make sure that all groups of pupils make equally strong progress and to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to each other and to their learning. Those I spoke to talked proudly about the school's broad and engaging curriculum. They appreciate the way that teachers develop their talents and skills through lessons in choral singing, learning musical instruments, art and sports. They know that adults make sure that the school is an inclusive place and teach them important values, such as respecting others. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain, and are supportive of each other.

At the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve teaching so that all pupils make the very best progress in their learning. You and your leadership team check the quality of teaching with rigour. You also make sure that teachers use their assessments of what pupils know and can do more frequently so that they can adapt their plans for teaching. You identify pupils at risk of falling behind and make sure that they receive appropriate support. As a result, most pupils make good progress and the proportion of pupils who attain the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 is well above the national average. However, in some areas, disadvantaged pupils have made slower progress than others from similar starting points, and boys have not attained the high standards achieved by girls in writing in recent years.

Safeguarding is effective.

The arrangements for keeping pupils safe in the school are a strength. Staff are trained thoroughly and so know how to identify and report potential risks to children. You keep careful records and leaders act swiftly to follow up reported concerns. Vetting checks on adults working in the school are well maintained and thorough. Supported by the Cathedral Schools Trust, governors provide robust oversight of safeguarding procedures and regularly review these with school leaders. As a result, safeguarding pupils' welfare is at the heart of the school's priorities.

Pupils told me that they feel safe in school and that there is no bullying. They trust adults to resolve any concerns they raise and to keep them safe, including when moving from the school building to the recreation area at playtimes. Pupils know how to stay safe online, for example by not sharing personal information with strangers. Most parents agree that their children are safe in school. Pupils' rates of attendance are above the national average, reflecting their positive attitudes to learning.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed our key lines of enquiry. Firstly, we considered how well leaders are making sure that boys' achievement in writing in key stage 1 continues to improve. In recent years, published results show that boys did not achieve as well as girls in this area.
- Teachers inspire boys by making sure that they write about engaging literature and real experiences. They also teach handwriting and spelling well, so that boys learn to write neatly and accurately. Current workbooks show that boys are improving their

use of more complex grammatical structures and punctuation. Boys also use sharply focused feedback from teachers well to help them to improve their handwriting and grammar. As a result, boys are now making better progress and their attainment in writing is rising.

- Next, I considered how well leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics in the early years and in key stage 1. Published information shows that this small group have achieved less well than their peers in recent years.
- In the early years, disadvantaged children receive effective help to recognise letters and the sounds they make. This well-planned teaching helps those with low starting points to prepare to read independently. In addition, teachers have made sure that these children develop their mathematical understanding through activities which help them to recognise and compare numbers, and to count fluently. We observed children counting during an engaging role-play activity where they counted to 20 with ease. As a result of careful planning by teachers, disadvantaged pupils are now making a strong start in the early years.
- Across key stage 1, leaders have introduced and refined a range of measures to help the progress of disadvantaged pupils. These include activities which strengthen pupils' emotional well-being and self-confidence. I observed pupils receiving carefully planned support to develop their fluency in reading and understanding of phonics. The more able disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 make good progress as a result of teachers' high expectations of what they can achieve. Leaders track the progress of disadvantaged pupils carefully so that they can tailor the support that pupils receive with precision. Consequently, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils making good progress is improving. A small number of pupils in both Year 1 and Year 2 are nevertheless making less progress than their peers in writing and mathematics.
- I considered how well leaders are making sure that the most able pupils in Years 3 and 4 make good progress in mathematics from their high starting points in key stage 1. You have rightly identified the need for the most able pupils to apply their knowledge to problem-solving and reasoning about mathematics. You have put in place training to help staff to challenge pupils to think more deeply. In lessons, teachers require the most-able pupils to explain their methods for solving arithmetic problems, and as a result these pupils have developed strong knowledge of number and can calculate accurately.
- Pupils' current workbooks demonstrate their firm foundations in mathematics, which they apply to solving more complex problems across a range of contexts. However, pupils' workbooks also show that, across the classes, the most able do not always develop their reasoning further or demonstrate their ability to think more deeply. At times, the most-able do not progress to tasks which challenge them to work at the higher standard they should reach. Teachers do not always use their assessments of what the most-able pupils can do to make sure that these pupils complete suitably demanding tasks.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- disadvantaged pupils make strong progress across all phases and subjects
- teachers make sure that the most able pupils in key stage 2 develop deeper thinking and reasoning skills in mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the Cathedral Schools Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for the City of Bristol. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Claire Mirams
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I held meetings with you and your leadership team. I met with representatives of the Cathedral Schools Trust and with school governors. I reviewed your plans for improvement, information on current pupils' progress and your own evaluation of teaching and the school's performance. I spoke on the telephone with your school improvement advisor and viewed records of reviews of the school's performance. You and I observed teaching. We reviewed pupils' workbooks together with your leadership team and a representative of the Cathedral Schools Trust.

I met with a group of pupils and discussed their views about the curriculum, behaviour, bullying and keeping safe, including online. I scrutinised various safeguarding records and current information about school attendance.

I also considered 97 parent responses to the online survey, Parent View, 32 responses to the staff survey and 49 responses to the pupil survey.