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Mrs S Newman
Executive Headteacher
Measham Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mrs Newman

Short inspection of Measham Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 30 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 your appointment as executive headteacher in 2016, you have brought about many improvements to the school. You lead with a clear vision and determination to ensure that all pupils receive the best education possible. There is strong capacity for further improvement. The school's motto, 'Where happy children flourish', underpins the shared vision for the school. The values of 'hope, peace, respect, thankfulness, forgiveness and love' are lived out in the school.

Parents and carers are very positive. Many commented on the school's happy, friendly nature and praise the care and support provided. As one parent said: 'We only have good things to say about the entire staff and management of the school and would highly recommend it to everyone.' Staff enjoy working at the school. They believe the school is very well led and they respect your leadership.

Pupils are very proud of their school. Lessons are typically calm and focused and there is a positive working atmosphere. Pupils behave very well. They cooperate well and listen attentively in assembly. Pupils enjoy their learning, especially in the way their reading book forms the basis of their English and topic work. They value the opportunities to visit places linked to their topic learning. Some are looking forward to the imminent visit to the Somme to commemorate the centenary of the end of the First World War. Pupils work well together and willingly accept the opportunities and responsibilities offered to them.

At the time of the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the provision for the most able pupils especially in mathematics and writing. You and your team have worked to develop the teaching of mathematics. As a result, increasing proportions of pupils in early years and key stages 1 and 2 are reaching the higher standard. You and other leaders have reviewed and improved the English curriculum. The standard of pupils' writing has improved. Provisional information suggests that in 2018, the proportions of pupils attaining greater depth in writing were well above national averages in key stages 1 and 2 and more children exceeded the expected standard in early years.

Another area of improvement raised by the previous inspection related to identifying and implementing extra support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) knows each of these pupils very well. She reviews their needs regularly and seeks support from external agencies when appropriate. However, too few of these pupils make sufficient progress because teachers' expectations are inconsistent.

Governors are committed to the success of this school. They visit regularly and know the school's strengths and areas for development. They fulfil many of their responsibilities very well. They appreciate and promote the school's vision and ethos and ensure that the school's finances are properly managed. However, governors' strategic role is less well developed. They are too reliant and accepting of the thorough information provided by leaders. Governors do not support and challenge leaders by holding them to account for educational provision and the progress pupils make.

Safeguarding is effective.

Governors and leaders ensure that all aspects of safeguarding arrangements work well and are fit for purpose. There is a strong and effective culture of safeguarding, with a focus on keeping all pupils safe. Staff are appropriately trained and receive regular updates. They understand their responsibilities well.

As the school's designated senior lead for safeguarding, you are tenacious in ensuring that vulnerable pupils are provided with appropriate support. Leaders work with a range of external agencies to support pupils and families. You have high expectations of other services and challenge them when you expect more from them.

Safeguarding records are detailed and accurate. Systems are in place to support the most vulnerable pupils. This approach is complemented by the 'building character curriculum' and 'character muscles'. Pupils learn how to be safe in different situations. They told me they are taught road, firework and bonfire safety as well as understanding the risks involved in online activity and the use of mobile phones. They feel safe at school and have a clear understanding of what bullying is. They are confident that they can turn to an adult who will deal with any concerns or worries they may have. Overwhelmingly, parents who responded to the online

survey, Parent View, say that their children are safe and happy at the school. Staff know pupils and their families very well and this is a strength of the school.

Inspection findings

- In recent years, progress in reading has not been as strong as progress in writing and mathematics. However, provisional information suggests that in 2018 the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard was above the national average in key stages 1 and 2. The proportions exceeding the expected standard at the end of Reception and attaining greater depth in Year 2 were well above national averages.
- Leadership of English is very effective. You ensure that there is consistency in the teaching of reading in all classes. A 'literary' approach to the curriculum in key stage 2 supports reading and wider learning. Novels such as 'Swallows and Amazons', 'Black Beauty', 'Twisted Fairy Tales' and 'The Explorer', form the basis of English and topic work learning. This approach is improving learning in reading and writing.
- Pupils are taught to read fluently, with inference and deduction, deepening their comprehension. As a result, they are developing mature reading skills. Provisional information suggests 42% attained greater depth in reading at the end of Year 2; this is well above the national average. Those I spoke with said they enjoy reading and are becoming regular readers.
- Improved reading is having a positive effect on the quality of written work, too. For example, a Year 6 pupil wrote, based on an inference exercise: 'The very semblance of memories were faint, shallow visions of their former selves, now blank.'
- Most children who start Reception show skills that are below those typically expected for their age, especially in communication and language. Learning journeys show they make good progress while in Reception.
- The proportion of children attaining a good level of development in early years improved in 2018 from 2017 but is below the national average. Provisional information for 2018 shows that the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected standard was higher than national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Changes in leadership of early years and opportunities for professional development have brought higher expectations and improved teaching and learning. Improved environments and resources support children in their self- and adult-directed learning. Children settle quickly and are taught routines which support their learning and prepare them well for Year 1. Their enthusiastic attitudes are clearly seen.
- Leaders are working to reduce persistent absence. You have reached out to parents of pupils who have poor attendance in a supportive, yet persistent way. You have used a range of approaches to make sure pupils attend school. Persistent absence has reduced from 2016 and overall attendance has improved this last year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the SENCo and teachers establish consistently high expectations for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and ensure that they are taught to higher standards of learning and achievement
- governors sharpen their practices to fully support and challenge leaders by asking probing questions and stringently hold them to account.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the director of education for the Diocese of Leicester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Davies
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you to discuss the school's effectiveness. I held discussions with five governors, including the chair of the governing body. I met with the SENCo and the early years leader. Together we observed the teaching of phonics and reading in lessons. I looked at samples of books with you and the senior teacher and samples of learning journeys with the early years leader. I also looked at examples of work produced by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities with the SENCo. I observed the whole-school assembly.

I looked at a range of documents, including information about: the safeguarding of pupils, the single central record, governance, and the progress pupils make. We evaluated current rates of attendance. I looked at the school's self-evaluation document and improvement plan. I also examined the school's website.

I spoke with parents before the start of the school day and considered the 20 responses and free-text comments submitted on the inspection questionnaire, Parent View. I considered the online responses from 17 members of staff and I met with eight Year 5 and 6 pupils.