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Mrs Julia Exton  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Exton

### **Short inspection of Uppingham Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 November 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.**

You and the leadership team, together with governors, have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your leadership of the school is respected and valued by staff and parents and carers. You have an in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and areas of weakness. Your evaluation of the school is comprehensive and accurate. Consequently, you have identified the priorities in areas requiring further improvement and your planning is well considered. Governors are kept well informed about school developments and the extent of both challenge and support has strengthened. Governors are supportive of the headteacher and make regular visits to the school in support of its further improvement. The external support provided by the local authority and the prospective Rutland Learning Trust has been instrumental in supporting leaders' drive for improvement. This support has sharpened processes to ensure consistency, clearer accountability and improved subject leadership. The culture of the school is positive and welcoming, staff morale is high, and the pupils are polite and courteous. Pupils are proud to be at the school and describe it as a friendly and fair school.

The previous inspection report called for leaders to check more regularly that pupils are fully engaged in their work and that pupils expanded their use of vocabulary in written work. In response to this, you have focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning to good effect. An important aspect to this has been your review and development of the curriculum. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning because they are enthused and inspired by the topics they

explore. In one lesson, for example, pupils listened intently about the experiences of evacuees during the Second World War. They were willing to share their thoughts and ideas following the effective questioning by their teacher. The school's revised curriculum is supporting pupils' key skills in reading, writing and mathematics. An example of this is provided in newspaper reports written in Year 6 about the fate of the Titanic. Topic work about the different passengers and survivor statistics helped to inform the level of detail pupils used in their extended writing. Furthermore, the implementation of the 'reading challenge' and vocabulary word-wall displays have helped to develop pupils' use of vocabulary. This was evident in samples of pupils' written work across all year groups. Pupils now have many opportunities to write at length.

Pupils' overall progress by the end of key stage 2 is average and has been so for the last three years across all subjects. Disadvantaged pupils have made stronger progress over the past two years, particularly in writing. The progress of these pupils was better than that of their peers. The funding for pupils in receipt of the pupil premium is well spent on meeting the needs of disadvantaged pupils, for example in ensuring that they receive close support during whole-class and small-group learning activities.

Despite improving attainment in 2018, however, fewer pupils achieved at the higher level in writing and mathematics. You have identified this as a priority for improvement and have taken appropriate action to address this issue. Evidence from pupils' workbooks shows that progress in these subjects is strengthening. The attainment of pupils at key stage 1 has strengthened overall since 2017, particularly in mathematics. The achievement of children in early years has been consistently strong.

Leaders use the primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding effectively. They have ensured that increasing numbers of pupils participate in sports-related activities, and this has been recognised by the school's accreditation of the School Games Award at gold level. Pupils are proud to be part of the school. They are appreciative of the opportunities for learning in extra-curricular activities. These include football, archery, cookery and the 'rock steady' music club. A very high proportion of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey would recommend the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You lead safeguarding well in the school. The safeguarding policy contains the latest government guidance, which the school follows. You have ensured that regular training is provided to keep staff updated on procedures and potential safeguarding risks. All staff understand what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's well-being. Appropriate checks are made on all staff and volunteers to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. The designated lead has implemented effective processes in following up safeguarding concerns. Leaders have embedded a culture of vigilance at the school.

The school works well with a range of external agencies to support pupils, and to make sure that they are kept safe and that they receive the additional support they need when appropriate.

Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe in school and that they are well cared for. They know whom they can talk to if they have any worries or concerns and are appreciative of the support they receive from their teachers and other adults in school. The curriculum provides pupils with many opportunities to learn about how they can keep themselves safe, including how to stay safe online and how to ensure personal safety, including road safety and cycle safety. School records show that incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils told the inspector that levels of bullying are low and that any occurrences are dealt with effectively by staff. As one pupil put it, 'Bullying is just not part of the culture of this school.' All parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey are confident that pupils feel safe at school.

### **Inspection findings**

- Pupils read widely and often. Leaders have effectively implemented the 'reading challenge' in Years 5 and 6, and pupils have responded enthusiastically to this. The new approach ensures that pupils are reading age-appropriate texts that stretch and develop their reading and comprehension skills. This is further complemented by 'book talk' discussion sessions based on whole-class reading. Leaders are planning to extend this initiative across all year groups during the school year.
- Learning is well planned and resourced. Expectations are high. Teachers make enthusiastic use of their subject knowledge to engage pupils' interest and challenge them. They routinely probe pupils' understanding through effective questioning. In one lesson, for example, a pupil persevered with his thinking about the procedure for subtractions so that he could share this with his peers. His clear answer was met by spontaneous applause. Pupils say that their learning has become increasingly challenging. It was noted, however, that teaching sometimes moves the learning on too quickly before checking that all pupils have understood.
- In phonics learning at key stage 1, pupils rapidly consolidate their understanding of letter sounds as a result of the engaging and innovative techniques that their teacher uses to reinforce key ideas.
- Children have a good start in the Reception class. The curriculum is creatively planned and is responsive to children's needs and interests. The learning environment is stimulating and well resourced. This enables children to learn well through discovery and play. On the day of the inspection, children were particularly engrossed in their learning about autumn themes.
- Pupils behave well around the school site and during lessons. There is a strong and supportive school ethos based on the school's key values. Pupils respond promptly to teachers' instructions, and are polite and respectful. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive.
- Leaders' investment in the 'Rainbow Room', which provides additional emotional

and literacy support for pupils at risk of falling behind, is successful in keeping pupils focused on their learning and in supporting pupils who demonstrate more challenging behaviours. Levels of exclusion at the school are low.

- Pupils with SEN and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress. Staff plan specific interventions to meet pupils' needs and the special educational needs coordinator, teachers and teaching assistants all support and monitor the progress of these pupils closely.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a greater proportion of pupils attain at the higher level in reading, writing and mathematics
- teachers consistently check pupils' understanding before moving learning on to the next stage.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Stevens  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I spoke with you and other school leaders and governors. I visited seven classes across most year groups, including Reception, to observe teaching and look at pupils' work. These visits were carried out jointly with the headteacher. I also listened to a sample of pupils reading in key stage 2. I also talked with eight pupils from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 and with others informally during lunchtime. A discussion took place with the school's designated safeguarding lead. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and record keeping, which included the school's record of recruitment checks on staff and case studies about referrals made to external agencies. I examined a range of additional documentary evidence. These included the school's self-evaluation, development planning and data on pupils' attainment and progress. Policies were also reviewed for safeguarding and the provision for pupils with SEND. A discussion was held with the chief executive officer of the Rutland Learning Trust. The school is due to join this trust on 1 December 2018.

I considered the views of 37 parents through their responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. No responses to Ofsted's survey for staff were received. In addition, I reviewed 15 responses to the school's own staff survey outcomes.