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Mr Paul Hayward
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hayward

Short inspection of St Andrew's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 January 2019, 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. The school joined with two other local primary schools to form the Mid-Trent Multi-Academy Trust in February 2016. You and senior leaders work across the three schools, and benefit from sharing knowledge and expertise. Effective teamwork ensures that your settled staff contribute well to school improvement. Engaging whole-school activities, such as a science focus on plastics and recycling, maintain pupils' curiosity in learning and their good behaviour and support their personal development and well-being.

Together with the leadership team, you have successfully tackled the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. Your approaches to the teaching of writing across the school are becoming embedded. You have actively engaged boys in writing through interviews with them to establish their interests and to identify any barriers to writing. This has resulted in better progress in the development of pupils' writing skills, particularly for boys. Effective training and support have raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. In mathematics, teachers use guidance from the school's comprehensive calculation policy to make sure that the level of challenge is appropriate for pupils of all abilities. The impact of training for teaching and support staff to improve the quality of questioning shows in the high-quality teaching of guided reading.

The care and nurture of pupils is a high priority and you value the positive relationships you have with parents and carers. Pupils and staff model the school's

Christian values well, treating each other with respect. Parents appreciate the friendly, welcoming, family atmosphere that you and the staff have created. They value the good communication. Surveys of the views of pupils, parents and staff confirm this.

Pupils are well behaved and conduct themselves well around school. Pupils say they feel safe at school and enjoy being there because teachers are kind and fair. They say that teachers help them to learn and teach them how to keep themselves safe, mentioning the need to be careful when talking to strangers and on the internet. Pupils know that bullying is unacceptable and say that teachers will deal with any bullying. At lunchtimes the key stage 2 play leaders encourage the use of the newly acquired reading sheds. They enjoy helping the younger pupils engage in reading activities and take their responsibilities seriously. In lessons pupils work hard, are focused on their learning and make good progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Governors and staff all understand their statutory responsibilities to keep pupils safe. They take these roles seriously. Governors ensure that checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are thorough. Leaders responsible for safeguarding ensure that all procedures are followed diligently and that any concerns are recorded fully. Leaders follow up pupils' absences urgently and work with families to improve pupils' attendance. The school recognises that this is an area that needs to be improved in order to reduce the numbers of pupils who are away from school too often. Leaders review policies relating to keeping pupils safe and the three schools in the multi-academy trust (MAT) have worked to create a MAT policy for safeguarding that is fit for purpose.

Inspection findings

- Improving the combined outcomes for reading and writing across the school has been one of your key priorities since September 2018. You have put in place effective monitoring and have set challenging targets for attainment in reading and writing across the school. This ensures that every teacher contributes effectively to pupils' progress in both of these subjects.
- We focused on pupils' progress in writing in key stage 2. This was because over the past year pupils' progress in writing was not as strong as in other subjects. You have improved the quality of teaching of writing across the school. All teachers now understand the national expectations for writing at the end of each year. You have improved the accuracy of teachers' assessments by establishing key performance indicators. You and other senior leaders check individual pupils' progress in detail, to see that they are making the progress they should, identifying quickly any pupil who is falling behind in their learning. More pupils in key stage 2 are now on course to attain the expected standard for their age in writing.
- Pupils experience a wide variety of writing activities that promote their good knowledge and understanding of the structures, purpose and organisation of

text. Themed curriculum weeks carefully link a range of writing tasks to opportunities for pupils to experience practical activities, research and visits. Displays around school capture the enthusiasm pupils have and promote cross-curricular activities. A focus on the link between reading and writing, choosing texts that particularly appeal to boys, is having an impact on the quality of boys' writing. Leaders monitor pupils' books carefully to ensure that more boys, including the most able, are now on course to attain the greater depth standard in writing.

- You have produced clear 'non-negotiables' in the form of 'bare necessities' for spellings to improve pupils' writing skills. Older pupils are encouraged to create their own success criteria for improving their writing. However, basic spelling errors are not routinely identified in some pupil's books and they do not always edit their work accurately.
- Training for teachers in the effective use of questioning in guided reading sessions is improving pupils' understanding of what they read. Shared reading sessions based on quality texts engage pupils in reading well. The promotion of reading for pleasure, including authors such as David Walliams, and opportunities for pupils to apply what they read through research projects, for example on the Battle of Britain, are engaging boys more actively in reading.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics in key stage 1 were below that in other subjects and below that seen nationally, especially for girls. Together with other senior leaders, you have provided effective training and support as well as putting in place comprehensive resources to support staff in the teaching of mathematical skills.
- The increased focus on developing pupils' calculation skills and effective staff training have improved the quality of teaching. Pupils in key stage 1 are now making better progress by choosing more efficient methods to find answers to problems expressed in words. You also introduced regular mathematics sessions at the start of the school day to develop pupils' fluency. Your close checking of progress and attainment shows that pupils are making stronger progress towards the challenging targets that have been set for the end of the year.
- During the inspection we discussed the school council's view that some subjects were taught infrequently, particularly physical education (PE), music, French and art. We looked at the scheme of work that had been produced for some of these subjects. You explained that the teaching of some of these subjects is organised into 'blocks' for a longer period of time. It was unclear whether this provides opportunities for pupils to build on their skills well enough. Teachers have had training to develop their expertise in teaching PE, but you have identified this as an area of continuing focus. A member of staff will undertake training in order to support colleagues further in the teaching of this subject. Middle leaders responsible for music and French currently do not have an accurate and comprehensive view of teaching in their subjects. You intend to develop this aspect of leadership to ensure that all pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Another focus of the inspection was the effectiveness of school leaders in ensuring that pupils attend school regularly and make the progress they should.

You and other leaders, including governors, monitor attendance regularly and have worked hard to build positive relationships to support families to encourage regular attendance. You check progress effectively and have put in place incentives such as certificates to reward high attendance. This has had a positive effect on attendance, but some families still choose to take holidays in term time. This has a negative impact on the progress of some pupils.

- You have followed up any concerns from parents regarding bullying and have put in place a comprehensive system of recording any incidents and have revised the programme for personal, social, health and emotional education. A 'worry box' in every class encourages pupils to highlight any issues that occur. You have arranged for lunchtimes to end slightly earlier and introduced a whole-school focus on exercise in order to improve behaviour at lunchtimes. This will be in the form of a walking activity once the 'daily mile' track is completed.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- middle leaders further develop their skills in monitoring the breadth of provision for their subjects so that all pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum
- the attendance of groups of pupils continues to rise and their progress improves.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Lichfield, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Blackburn
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Before the inspection, I looked at a range of information, including the previous inspection report, the published achievement information and the school's website.

At the start of the inspection, we agreed the areas of focus and the timetable for the day.

During the inspection, you visited lessons with me along with the deputy headteacher and we discussed our observations. We met to discuss current assessment information, the school's self-evaluation, the development plan and monitoring information. We also reviewed documentation relating to safeguarding checks, policies and procedures.

I met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. I also met with the chief executive officer of the MAT. I spoke to parents as they dropped off their children in the morning. I also took account of 27 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, along with a parent questionnaire undertaken by the school.

I spoke to pupils during lessons and at breaktime as well as listening to members of the school council. I took account of 25 responses to the pupil survey and 11 responses to the staff survey.