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Mr Keith Farquhar
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Farquhar

Short inspection of Cooper and Jordan Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 February 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 March 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have a clear vision for the school that is based on the Christian values of fellowship, friendship, forgiveness, compassion, endurance and respect. These values are of high importance to governors, staff and pupils. Pupils confidently explain what each of the values means to them. For example, one pupil explained that 'Compassion is more than just feeling sorry for someone. Try to be in their shoes and know what it would feel like if it happened to you.'

Staff and pupils model the school's values and treat each other with respect. The positive relationships fostered by adults contribute to pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. Attendance has been above national averages for the past three years and the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school is extremely low. Pupils listen carefully in lessons and work hard. They cooperate well in pairs and small groups. However, sometimes pupils' work is not as neat as it should be because not all teachers insist on high standards of presentation.

Pupils are confident, articulate and polite. They are proud of their school and its ethos. Pupils develop a sound understanding of British values through learning about different faiths and beliefs. They appreciate opportunities to take responsibility, for example as members of the school council and the worship team. You ensure that pupils have a voice in shaping their school. For example, pupils talked enthusiastically about the new jacket potato oven that has been installed in

response to their feedback and the reintroduction of 'golden time' in key stage 2.

You, senior leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors have the skills and expertise to hold you and other leaders to account effectively. They make regular visits to the school to question leaders and to check on the effectiveness of their actions. However, leaders do not make thorough enough checks on teaching to ensure that their actions are having the intended impact on pupils' progress. For example, recent improvements in writing at the end of key stages 1 and 2 are fragile. Work in books shows that teachers do not routinely address errors in pupils' spelling and punctuation, which means that pupils' writing skills are not as strong as they should be. Leaders have not identified this. Writing does not feature prominently enough in leaders' improvement plans.

At the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve pupils' writing in key stage 2. You have adapted your approach to the teaching of English. Teachers now link reading and writing activities effectively. They plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to write, which means that pupils enjoy writing. In 2018, pupils' progress in writing at the end of key stage 2 improved. Attainment rose to be above the national average. However, work in books shows that too many current pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable. This is because teachers' expectations about the quality of pupils' writing are still not high enough.

You have worked hard to cultivate positive and productive relationships with parents. You have employed a parent and pupil support worker to communicate with parents. Weekly bulletins and a school app provide parents with up-to-date information about the different aspects of school life. Parents take part in termly 'open afternoons', where they come into school and work alongside their children. Each class leads regular assemblies to share and celebrate their learning with parents. Attendance at these events is high. Parents are positive about the school. Almost all of the parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, say that their children are happy, well taught and make good progress at school. Many parents comment on the school's nurturing ethos. A small number of parents would like more information about their children's progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders, staff and governors understand their responsibilities in ensuring that pupils are safe. This is because they receive regular training on a range of safeguarding topics including extremism and radicalisation. Staff can identify the signs of neglect and abuse and know the process to follow should they have a concern about a pupil.

Pupils feel safe at school and understand how to stay safe when using the internet. They learn to 'zip it, block it, flag it' if they come across anything online that makes them feel uncomfortable. Pupils understand what bullying is and how it differs from 'falling-out'. Although they say that pupils sometimes fall out, bullying is less common. They are confident that adults mostly resolve any issues that occur. Most

parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children feel safe and are well looked after at school.

Inspection findings

- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 has been at least in line with national averages for the past two years. Attainment in writing rose to be slightly above the national average in 2018. However, the proportion of pupils working at greater depth is consistently below national averages.
- Leaders' plans rightly focus on improving the achievement of the most able pupils. In mathematics, leaders have introduced teaching 'non-negotiables' to improve pupils' fluency and develop their problem-solving skills. Pupils are taught in ability groups so that teachers can plan work that matches pupils' needs. However, in key stage 1 work is not sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils. Pupils spend too much time completing work they can already do, which limits their progress. Tasks do not deepen pupils' understanding sufficiently and there are too few opportunities for pupils to reason and solve problems.
- Similarly, in writing, teachers' expectations of the most able pupils are not high enough. Pupils write regularly and build their writing stamina over time. They make sustained progress in their use of descriptive vocabulary. However, the most able pupils do not learn the grammar and punctuation skills they need to write at greater depth. Pupils' writing consists of too many simple sentences with little variation in sentence structure.
- The most able pupils enjoy reading. They read for pleasure and can name favourite authors such as Julia Donaldson and Roald Dahl. Pupils read aloud with fluency, accuracy and understanding. They use their strong phonics skills successfully to decode unknown words.
- Pupils' progress in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 improved in 2018. However, for the past two years boys have not made as much progress as girls in these subjects. This gap in progress widened in 2018. Leaders have taken action to improve boys' motivation to read and write. Teachers choose class texts carefully to appeal to the interests of boys and girls. In Year 6, pupils recently read 'The boy in the striped pyjamas' and 'Kensuke's kingdom, which boys particularly enjoyed. A project on gaming in Year 4 also captured boys' interests and motivated them to write.
- The school's assessment information shows that boys and girls are currently making similar progress. However, it is clear from work in books that too many pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable. This is because teachers do not ensure that pupils apply their spelling, grammar and punctuation skills well enough in their independent writing in English and other subjects.
- Pupils study a broad curriculum in both key stages. Subject leaders are reviewing the progression of skills across year groups to ensure that pupils gain a suitably deep knowledge and understanding of the wider curriculum. These leaders have recently received training to support them in their roles. However, it is too soon to determine the impact of this work on pupils' progress.

- Leaders enrich the curriculum through a range of visitors and extra-curricular activities that develop pupils' sports skills as well as providing opportunities for them to follow their interests, for example in the woodlands group and Lego club. Pupils benefit from high-quality physical education lessons taught by sports coaches and some pupils receive specialist music tuition.
- Work in books shows that pupils' knowledge and understanding build over time in subjects such as history and geography. In science, pupils make good progress in acquiring a secure understanding of the topics they study, particularly in key stage 2. In some year groups, but not all, pupils develop their scientific skills by planning and conducting investigations. However, teaching across the wider curriculum does not develop pupils' subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills in enough depth.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders' checks on teaching are sufficiently thorough and inform the priorities in improvement plans
- teachers have high expectations of pupils' spelling, punctuation and presentation in every lesson and routinely address errors so that these are not repeated
- the most able pupils in key stage 1 are fully challenged in their learning so that they make the progress of which they are capable
- teachers deepen pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Claire Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the English and mathematics leaders and seven members of the governing body. I spoke to a representative from the diocese and a representative from the local authority. I observed, with you, pupils' learning in parts of eight lessons. I also observed, with the deputy headteacher, pupils' learning in parts of three lessons. I looked at pupils' work in their English, mathematics, topic and science books in lessons and with senior leaders. I held a meeting with a group of pupils and talked to pupils in lessons. I also listened to a group of pupils read. I examined school documentation,

including information relating to current pupils' attainment and progress in reading and writing, the school's development plan and your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I also scrutinised a range of safeguarding documents. I spoke to parents at the start of the school day and took into account the 122 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the 111 free-text responses.