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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Phil Abbott
Executive Headteacher
Worksop Priory Church of England Primary Academy
Holles Street
Worksop
Nottinghamshire
S80 2LJ

Dear Mr Abbott

Short inspection of Worksop Priory Church of England Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 12 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

You have continued to lead the school with great determination and commitment and the school is moving forward with pace. You lead by example and have created a school culture with a clear sense of purpose. You have an accurate and realistic understanding of the school's strengths. Your improvement plans clearly set out what needs to improve further. Following the school's previous inspection, you have ensured that targets set for school improvement are ambitious. Standards across the school have risen.

You are well supported by an able team of senior and middle leaders. Leaders are enthusiastic and demonstrate a good understanding of school improvement. They are driven to find new ways to improve both the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Leadership is a strength of the school. Your expectations for staff and for pupils are high and not up for negotiation. You ensure that staff morale is high by valuing their work. All staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey agreed strongly that they are proud to be a part of this school.

Pupils are happy and take great pride in their school. The school is welcoming and

provides a stimulating environment where pupils enjoy learning. Displays around the school are bright and reflect the high standard of pupils' work. You have enriched the curriculum with clubs and additional activities. These make a valuable contribution to pupils' social and personal development. Pupils I spoke with were confident and articulate. They were keen to talk about their varied and fun learning opportunities. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Values of respect and tolerance are deeply embedded in the school's ethos. Pupils explained to me that bullying and racism do not happen in their school. The vast majority of parents shared this view.

Since the school converted to an academy in September 2016, you have continued to improve the quality of teaching. High-quality teaching has supported more pupils to attain the expected standard in each of reading, writing and mathematics than has been seen nationally in both 2017 and 2018 by the time they leave the school. Teachers plan learning that is well structured so that pupils know what they are trying to achieve. They set activities that engage and motivate pupils in their learning. Teachers use questioning routinely to check on pupils' understanding. They match work well to pupils' needs and have high expectations for what they can achieve. The level of challenge, however, is not equally high in all classes. Leaders, teachers and teaching assistants use accurate information about pupils' progress and attainment to identify and fill any gaps in pupils' learning. They have high ambitions for pupils, regardless of the disadvantages they may face. High expectations, high-quality teaching and effective use of assessment mean that pupils effectively overcome any barriers and achieve well.

In the early years, most of the children start with skills well below those typical for their age. An increasing proportion of children are catching up quickly and reach a good level of development by the end of Reception. Some children, however, do not reach this important milestone and so are not as well prepared for Year 1 as they could be. You have been successful in ensuring that many of the most able pupils and those of middle ability reach the high standards of which they are capable. A high level of challenge, however, is not consistent in all classes. In the pursuit of excellence, you are rightly ambitious that more of these pupils, in all classes, achieve these high standards.

You are well supported by the Southwell and Nottingham Multi-Academy Trust and the local governing body. You share your expertise with other schools in the multi-academy trust. Governors know the school well. They have a clear understanding of the actions you are taking to improve the school further. Following the school's previous inspection, governors now make regular checks on how successful leaders' actions are. Governors keep their knowledge and skills up to date through frequent training and regular contact with other governing bodies. They have the experience and skills necessary to hold you, and other leaders, to account in the pursuit of excellent outcomes for pupils.

Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school. One parent summed this up by saying that 'Worksop Priory is the very best school I could have chosen for my child.'

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You and the head of school ensure that safeguarding throughout the school has a high profile. The school's curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe and care for themselves. Pupils told me unanimously that they feel safe in school and they were confident that staff would help them if they had any worries.

Leaders have carried out all the necessary checks on the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. You keep staff well informed about safeguarding matters. Staff are caring and know the pupils well. They explained with confidence the action they need to take if they have a concern that a pupil may be at risk. The head of school has established strong relationships with outside agencies to support the needs of pupils and their families. She diligently follows up all concerns and makes sure that pupils are kept safe. Systematic record-keeping is in place. All the parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their children were safe. They made a point of saying that 'the wrap-around care [was] second to none'.

Inspection findings

- Children in the early years make at least good progress, and some catch up quickly to reach a good level of development. The early years leader has a strong understanding of the provision and of individual children's needs. A higher proportion of children than in previous years are entering the school with communication and language difficulties. Adults develop children's communication and language skills well. They provide opportunities for the children to speak and listen in a range of situations. They also use prompts to encourage children's responses and develop their confidence to express themselves. The school has also appointed a speech and language therapist to work with some children. Over time, an increasing proportion of children are reaching standards similar to those seen nationally by the end of the Reception Year.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics screening check dipped. A high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) made good progress in their phonics learning. They did not, however, reach the national standard. Leaders have taken effective action to refine the teaching of phonics. New teaching approaches and bespoke programmes are helping pupils to improve their phonic knowledge and understanding. Pupils use and apply their phonic skills well when reading. Pupils heard reading during the inspection did so with the fluency and understanding appropriate to their age.
- Leaders' actions to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have been extremely successful. From low starting points, disadvantaged pupils make sufficient progress to attain as well as, and sometimes higher than, other pupils nationally by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. Leaders have not been complacent about their success with disadvantaged pupils. They have deepened the analysis they undertake of disadvantaged pupils' learning. This has helped to

direct support more precisely when progress occasionally dips. Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school continue to achieve well.

- In 2018, the proportions of pupils reaching a greater depth and a high standard in their learning by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 increased to be much closer to, and in some cases in line with or above, national averages. Leaders have implemented a mastery approach to the teaching of reading and writing. Pupils are learning more complex vocabulary and using interrogation and inference skills more frequently. Teachers are providing pupils with opportunities to apply their learning and deepen their understanding. A higher proportion of pupils are reaching the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics than have done in previous years. A few inconsistencies remain, however, in different years and subjects, and for different groups of pupils.
- Pupils' attendance, above average in 2017, dipped a little in 2018. A higher proportion of pupils did not attend school as often as they should. This was particularly true for disadvantaged pupils and girls. Leaders' actions have ensured that this dip has been quickly rectified.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that teaching further increases the proportion of:

- children who reach a good level of development by the end of Reception
- pupils who reach high standards in their learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Vondra Mays
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I discussed leaders' self-evaluation of the school, and shared my key lines of enquiry. I held meetings with you, the head of school, middle leaders, the chief executive officer and members of the local governing body. I observed pupils' learning, alongside the head of school, in several lessons. I observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school. I spoke with pupils informally and met formally with a group of pupils. I also listened to pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 read and examined samples of pupils' work. In addition, I

considered a range of documents. These included the school's improvement plans and records relating to pupils' progress, attainment and attendance. I considered the parents' responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as staff survey responses. I reviewed the school's safeguarding practices. The school's website was also checked to confirm whether it meets the recommendations on the publication of specified information.