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Mrs Kate Litchfield
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Litchfield

Short inspection of Seagrave Village Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 March 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 January 2016.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

In the recent past, the school has been through a period of turbulence in leadership. During this time, pupils' progress in key stage 2 was not as strong as it should have been. Since taking up your post in September 2018, you have made a positive impact. You have quickly established excellent relationships with staff, pupils and their parents. There is a shared commitment, determination and ambition to improve further. You have carefully considered the school's strengths and areas for improvement and put into place clear plans to address these. Your calm and considered approach to school improvement is ensuring that all involved know and understand their part in the process.

Pupils are polite, enthusiastic and friendly. They speak thoughtfully and confidently about their school. Pupils behave well and have very positive attitudes to learning. They are respectful and caring, helping each other in lessons and on the playground. As we discussed challenging work, one said to another, 'You just have to believe in yourself.' They say they 'know everyone' and that school is 'fun'. Their attendance is above the national average and very few are persistently absent. Staff care for pupils well. There are strong, positive relationships between pupils and teachers. One parent praised 'the good balance between academic learning and social and emotional development'.

Parents and carers are very positive about the school's work and particularly praise your impact since taking up your position. The very large majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as those who queued up to speak with me before school, say that the school is well led and managed. Parents are confident that you will improve the school further. One parent said to me that choosing the school for her child was her 'best decision ever'.

Pupils love to read and do so often, at home and in school. Teachers check what pupils are reading and prompt them to make wise choices. As a result, they read widely and choose their books carefully. Pupils appreciate the wide range of texts provided in class and in the revamped school library. They speak with enthusiasm about reading challenging literature, such as 'The Three Musketeers' and 'Frankenstein'.

Leaders have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The school website contains the required information and is updated regularly by leaders. You have recently introduced a new way of electronically sharing each day's learning with parents. They say that they appreciate the information they receive about their children.

You have established an effective monitoring programme. Comprehensive improvement plans detail who will check on leaders' actions and when they will do this. Governors are fully involved in this process. As a result, leaders and governors know exactly what is working well and what could be better. You are refining your plans further so that governors and the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust can hold you to account even more effectively. You welcome their challenge and support.

You have worked with your staff to improve the quality of teachers' assessments so that they are more accurate. Teachers now use this assessment information more effectively to inform their planning and teaching. You meet regularly with teachers to check on pupils' progress. These meetings enable you to identify and provide additional support where needed. As a result, pupils' progress is strengthening across the school. You have identified aspects of assessment practice which need further improvement and are working with staff on these.

Since your appointment, you have worked with staff to review and develop the curriculum in all subjects so that it enables pupils to develop their knowledge and skills more progressively. You have also sought to ensure that pupils benefit from a greater range of first-hand learning opportunities. For example, a local farmer visits the school and then the pupils visit the farm. Pupils also contribute to keeping and looking after chickens. Pupils enjoyed their 'Viking' experience and could share with me what they had learned. There is more to be done with staff to improve curriculum planning.

Pupils have opportunities to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. One parent commented positively that pupils are offered the opportunities that might be expected from a larger school, while benefiting from the advantages of a small school. These opportunities support pupils' learning effectively and contribute to their

strong personal development.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders, including the local governing body, have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Your staff receive regular and effective training and are aware of their responsibilities. You maintain comprehensive records of all referrals made and follow up with external agencies where appropriate. You have established strong partnerships with external agencies so that pupils and their families receive support in a timely fashion. Leaders ensure that the required checks are completed to ensure that staff are suitable to work in the school.

All parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, say that their children feel safe in school. Pupils who spoke with me agreed with this wholeheartedly. They receive a good grounding in how to keep themselves safe and recognise risk. They learn about fire, road and water safety. The older pupils had visited Warning Zone the day before the inspection and related this to what they had learned in school about online safety. They understand the importance of not sharing their personal information online and know to tell an adult when they see anything that concerns them.

Pupils have a clear understanding of what bullying is. They say that it rarely happens but that teachers deal with any concerns quickly and effectively. You are currently working towards a national award for your work on anti-bullying. Pupils that I spoke with all said that they had a trusted adult in school that they could talk to if they had any worries. The school council has recently led an initiative to set up a letter box where pupils can share their worries and seek help if needed.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I looked at how well leaders have managed the considerable changes to senior leadership that have taken place over the past three years. Throughout this time, the CEO of the trust has worked closely with the local governing body to ensure that standards and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment improve. The professional development activities provided for subject leaders have been particularly effective.
- In 2016, pupils' attainment and progress in the key stage 2 national curriculum tests were very low. The school joined the multi-academy trust just after these results were received. The trust acted quickly to provide effective support and training for staff and results improved in 2017. However, results in mathematics were still well below the national average. Teachers benefited from further training provided by the trust and the local teaching school alliance. Leaders revised the school's approach to the teaching of mathematics. Results in 2018 improved further and were above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics at the expected standard.
- Pupils' mathematical fluency is a strength. The most able say that they find this

aspect of mathematics easy. They enjoy practising their times tables using the online resource provided by the school. However, too few pupils reach the higher standard because of weaknesses in their mathematical reasoning skills. Leaders are working with staff to ensure that they offer enough challenge in lessons, particularly to the most able pupils. Visits to classrooms show that staff are increasingly expecting pupils to justify their thinking and to apply their understanding to new and different types of mathematical problems.

- The proportion of children in early years who attain a good level of development has been broadly average for the past two years. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in key stage 1 has also been broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. In both key stages, girls have achieved particularly well. However, boys achieved standards well below those of girls in reading and writing. Recognising this, leaders have taken part in a research project to develop boys' writing skills. They have reviewed the tasks and resources that are available and are providing more opportunities for all pupils, particularly boys, to read and write. In phonics sessions, teachers model sounds effectively and address misconceptions promptly. Pupils are increasingly successful in applying their phonics skills in their reading and writing.
- By the end of key stage 1, pupils have many opportunities to write at length. When we visited classrooms during the inspection, we saw pupils writing a letter to a family member. As a result of effective modelling of the task by the teacher, pupils fully understood what was expected of them. They readily shared ideas and supported each other to improve their work. Pupils' workbooks show that they consistently produce high-quality and well-presented written work. They take great pride in their cursive handwriting. Evidence seen indicates that boys' progress is improving.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers consistently challenge pupils to justify and explain their mathematical thinking so that more reach the higher standard
- recent improvements in curriculum planning and the use of assessment information are embedded and sustained.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Sanchez-Thompson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Together, we visited classes in all year groups to observe teaching, learning and assessment and to look at pupils' work. We discussed the school's effectiveness and the actions taken to ensure further improvement.

I met with the subject leaders for English and mathematics. I also met with the CEO and director of schools from the multi-academy trust. I spoke with the co-chair and another member of the local governing body. I also spoke with a group of staff. I met with a group of pupils from key stage 2 and talked informally with other pupils in lessons and during breaktime. I met with parents on the playground at the beginning of the school day.

I looked at a range of documents, including your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the school's development plan. I also scrutinised the school's safeguarding systems, records and associated documents. I checked assessment information on how well pupils are achieving. I took account of 28 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 19 written comments from parents. I also considered four responses to the staff questionnaire and one response to the pupil questionnaire.