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Mrs Belinda Allen  
Executive Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Allen

### **Short inspection of Rudham CofE Primary Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 27 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 May 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There have been some changes in teaching staff that have led to some lack of continuity in pupils' progress. As a result, for a time, pupils' outcomes were not as strong as you had hoped or expected. Over time, some less-effective teaching has led to an uneven experience of education for some current pupils. You have successfully tackled ineffective performance. Teaching is now strong throughout the school.

Since the previous inspection, the predecessor school closed and reopened as an academy on 1 June 2016 as part of the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academy Trust (DNEAT). Since then, the teachers have benefited from a wide range of regular training provided by DNEAT. Rigorous and effective challenge and support are provided by the trust. This includes checking that teachers' assessment of pupils' work is accurate through regular comparisons with that found in other schools.

The majority of parents and carers responding to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, would recommend the school. Most believe that their child is making good progress and is taught well. Nearly all say that their child is safe and most that they are happy. Most of the written responses are highly supportive. There is a small amount of dissatisfaction around teacher turnover and the executive headteacher having responsibilities in other federation schools. The development of the head of school role, together with subject leadership shared across schools in the federation, ensures that leadership capacity is strong.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

Procedures for keeping pupils safe are secure. You and other leaders ensure that all safeguarding procedures are robust and fit for purpose. Pupils have a safe environment in which to learn. Pupils told inspectors about how the school teaches them to be safe, for example when using computers. Indeed, the school has invested in materials to keep parents regularly updated on potential technology-based risks. All pupils feel very well looked after by teachers.

Leaders and staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding and pupils' physical and mental welfare. Leaders respond well to events that have an impact on the school community. The trust checks the school's safeguarding arrangements.

## **Inspection findings**

- I pursued several lines of enquiry to ascertain whether the school remains good. The first of these was based on the published information about the most recent set of national tests from 2018. In these tests, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was well above the national average, but the proportion attaining greater depth was below. Accepting that the number of children taking the tests was small and so each pupil is represented by a large percentage difference, I nevertheless wanted to check that the most able pupils had work matched to their abilities. I was reassured of this. Leaders, including those from the trust, ensure that teachers have the knowledge of test requirements coupled with a deep understanding of each pupil's abilities to ensure that work provides suitable challenge. Pupils are keen to rise to the challenge.
- An area for improvement from the last inspection of the predecessor school was around the teaching of mathematics. Pupils' progress in mathematics over a three-year period has been less strong than that in English. I found that over the last two years there has been a lot of effective work to improve pupils' ability in mathematics. Leaders have identified that problem solving was a key weakness in pupils' mathematics performance. Leaders have invested in problem-solving resources. Teachers have received training from the trust. Subject leaders have stepped up the monitoring of teaching and checking of pupils' books. The regular short opportunities to work through mathematics problems at speed at different times from mathematics lessons help pupils to develop fluency in tackling mathematics problems or knowing their tables. Checking pupils' work throughout lessons and giving immediate feedback is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. The impact of these improvements in the teaching and leadership of mathematics is that very nearly all pupils are making progress that is at least in line with leaders' expectations.
- I checked that pupils follow a rich curriculum. Pupils enjoy a wide range of subjects. Year 6 pupils listed their favourites, which included religious education (RE), art, science, mathematics and computing. The school has established methods for assessing pupils across the full curriculum, with increasing emphasis on pupils' subject-specific progress rather than skills coverage. The trust provides opportunities to check the quality of pupils' work and the standards they are

achieving in foundation subjects, for example in history, geography and RE. This ensures that teachers' assessment of work in these subjects matches the quality of work in pupils' books. However, there is more work to do in identifying the key knowledge and concepts and the best order in which to teach them, to maximise pupils' learning in each subject. Studying French for blocks of time rather than consistently every week restricts pupils' progress in this subject. Regular trips and visits, such as recent visits to Norwich Castle or to the lifeboat at Wells, bring learning alive. Pupils' enjoyment of learning and their regular attendance are the result of the school's very engaging curriculum.

- Finally, the national tests in reading at the end of key stage 1 in 2018 saw pupils attaining above the national average at both the expected level and the higher level. However, in the Year 1 phonics check, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was only broadly average. The numbers are low, and so the difference between below and above average is down to the performance of one or two individuals. The quality of phonics teaching and of reading is strong. There is a real focus on the teaching of phonics across the early years and key stage 1. Leaders ensure that progress is tracked, and groups needing extra help are recognised at an early stage. In 2018, the school was chosen for early years moderation within the local authority. All teacher judgements were agreed, demonstrating the school's ability to assess accurately.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- current effective teaching overcomes previous inconsistencies in pupils' experience of education
- the curriculum is developed further to build knowledge sequentially in each subject.

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

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, leaders, teachers and other staff, the chair and a member of the governing body, representatives of the DNEAT, the academy

executive principal and all Year 6 pupils. I also spoke to pupils in other classes. Together with you, I made short visits to all classes to observe teaching, to see pupils at work and to look at work in their books. I observed pupils at lunchtime and breaktime. I reviewed school documents about self-evaluation, development planning and safeguarding, including the single central record and records of child protection. I also considered the 41 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire from parents, 29 from pupils and seven responses from staff.