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Mr Craig Moxham  
Headteacher  
Cotgrave CofE Primary School  
1 The Cross  
Cotgrave  
Nottinghamshire  
NG12 3HS

Dear Mr Moxham

### **Short inspection of Cotgrave CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 2 May 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 December 2015.

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

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

In this small school, you and your team create a warm, family environment where pupils feel safe and are valued as unique individuals. Pupils and their families are known and cared for exceptionally well. This is underpinned by an ethos which permeates all aspects of school life. Parents enthuse about the school and appreciate the family feel. One parent reflected the view of many when she commented, 'My child goes to school happy and comes home happy.' Your 'open door' policy enables parents to feel that they can approach the school about any concerns and are confident that they will be listened to. They speak highly of the headteacher and the staff. Almost all parents who spoke to me during the inspection or responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said that they would recommend the school.

Pupils are also proud of their school. They say that the school is a safe and happy place. They trust the adults and are confident that they are there to help them if they have a problem. Pupils demonstrate maturity in their understanding that not all pupils find school easy and express a desire to support these pupils. This is evident around the school as pupils play and learn well together. Pupils welcome the opportunity to talk about their work and say that they find their topics interesting.

Since the last inspection you have provided stability in leadership and formed a successful formal collaboration with two other church schools. As a team, you have

worked hard to build the ethos and culture of the school in order to raise aspirations and ensure purposeful learning while developing an improving curriculum. Nevertheless, there is still work to be done to raise standards further. Sometimes teacher's expectations are not high enough, particularly for the most-able pupils. In writing, opportunities are missed to extend pupils' use of vocabulary and develop more complex writing techniques. Consequently, teaching is no better than good. You recognise that securing these higher standards in all classes and all subjects is key to fulfilling your ambition to become an outstanding school.

The school provides pupils with many opportunities through the '100 activities' that are identified for each pupil to access during their time at the school. There is a wide range of carefully considered experiences, both during and beyond the school day as part of your extended curriculum. These include a school residential visits to Norfolk and The Peak District, as well as visits to a mosque and the Holocaust Centre.

You and your team have high aspirations for pupils and have a desire to improve the school. You have correctly identified the areas where more work is needed and leaders, governors and staff have the capacity to make improvements successfully.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You place a high priority on keeping pupils safe. Leaders and governors have ensured that current safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are of high quality. Staff see safeguarding as everyone's responsibility. You provide all staff with relevant and regular training so that they know what to do if they have any concerns.

Pupils understand the difference between disagreements and bullying. They are adamant that there is no bullying in school. Parents also report that bullying is rare and that staff act swiftly to resolve differences between pupils. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online and report that this is regularly discussed in lessons.

All parents and pupils who I spoke to or responded to the online questionnaires reported that pupils are safe, happy and well looked after at school. This is a strength of the school.

### **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, I looked closely at your work to improve pupils' progress in writing, especially at key stage 2. I also considered how the school was providing challenge for all pupils, in particular the most able, and examined historical and current rates of pupils' attendance.
- During the past three years an increasing proportion of pupils are working beyond the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2.
- Across key stage 2 the most-able pupils in writing do not have enough opportunities to use more complex styles of writing and consequently do not write to a high enough standard.

- Leaders have accurately identified raising standards and improving pupils' resilience and determination to achieve highly as a key priority for school improvement. However, these improvement plans do not focus sharply enough on the detail that will enable pupils to make accelerated progress in specific areas.
- All teachers plan for challenge in lessons. However, in some lessons teacher's expectations do not match the abilities of the pupils and do not support them to reach the higher standards. In some lessons pupils are not clear about how to improve their work, while in other lessons teachers do not consistently push pupils to attempt more challenging work. Pupils do not always embrace challenge and therefore do not achieve the higher standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not have the same expectations of pupils' written work in subjects other than English. Where opportunities to write in other subjects are given, written work is of a lower standard and pupils do not use these opportunities to apply and practise the skills they are taught in English.
- English leaders are developing their support for all staff in this subject. They have carefully researched and purchased resources that will accelerate pupils' progress and have provided staff with appropriate training.
- Leaders use information from teachers' assessments effectively to identify pupils who are falling behind; additional provision is allocated to help these pupils make faster progress.
- Pupils attend school regularly and absence is carefully tracked by school leaders. Pupils understand the importance of coming to school and enjoy the competition between the classes for the 'attendance cup'. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has improved significantly.
- Pupils settle quickly in lessons because they are keen to learn and do well. They listen carefully to teachers and other adults during lessons. They enjoy working together and frequently extend their learning through their discussion with each other. In one lesson there was an animated discussion about how Thomas Edison invented the first light bulb. In another lesson pupils worked successfully together to plan where their new school 'prayer chair' should go and how it should be decorated.
- The governing body is well informed and has a wide range of skills which strengthens the leadership of the school. Governors have a secure understanding of the areas for development and are determined to ensure that progress towards these priorities is rapid. Regular monitoring visits to school ensure that the governors have the knowledge and experience to recognise and celebrate success as well as ask probing questions to ensure that the school is led effectively.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans for improvement and checks of their implementation are more sharply linked to improving pupil progress in order to drive more rapid improvement and

enable the governing body to hold leaders to closer account for improving the school

- teachers have high expectations of pupils and match work more accurately to their abilities so that the most able pupils are appropriately challenged to attain highly, especially in writing at key stage 2
- pupils have a wide range of opportunities to apply and develop their skills in a range of subjects working across the curriculum.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, 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

Caroline Poole  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I spoke with parents at the start of the day and met with you, subject leaders for English and two representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors.

I met formally with a group of pupils from Years 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 and I also spoke with pupils when I observed their behaviour at breaktime. We visited all classes together to observe teaching and learning and examined pupils' English, topic and science books.

In addition, I scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the single central register (the school's record of safeguarding recruitment checks on staff).

I examined the school's website to check that it meets the requirements on the publication of specified information.

I took account of 24 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, 24 responses to the Ofsted free-text service, 13 responses to the staff survey and 22 responses from pupils to Ofsted's online survey.