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Dear Mrs Duffell

Short inspection of St Peter's Crosskeys CofE Academy

Following my visit to the school on 1 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 your predecessor 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.

You and the senior leadership team have established an inclusive and welcoming culture throughout the school. Central to the success of the school are the excellent relationships which exist between staff, pupils and their families. Pupils are valued as individuals and leaders have high aspirations. Families are well supported by leaders and staff. Parents and carers appreciate the 'extra mile' staff will go to ensure that children are safe, happy and thriving in school. They overwhelmingly agree that the school is an 'amazing' place for children to learn and succeed. A typical parental comment was, 'The school provides sympathy, support and high-quality teaching well beyond anything I expected.'

Shortly after the previous inspection of the predecessor school in 2015, there was a period of turbulence within staffing at senior leadership level. This disrupted the pace of the school's improvement during this time. Through your determined leadership, and with support from local governors and the trust, this period of change has been managed effectively. You have since forged a new, cohesive senior leadership team, with the appointment of a deputy headteacher, key stage 1 leader and special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). The strength and depth of leadership is excellent. Together, you and senior leaders have maintained the strengths identified at the predecessor school's last inspection and are rapidly improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. By the end of key stage 2, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics

is rising and most pupils make strong progress from their starting points.

The quality of teaching and learning is typically good. Teaching is particularly strong in the early years and key stage 2. When teaching is stronger teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and carefully match activities to the abilities and interests of children and pupils. They explain tasks well and ensure that pupils understand what they need to do to be successful. You have recognised that teaching is less effective in key stage 1 and are taking effective action to improve this. In this key stage, however, there are still some occasions when work is not suitably challenging in reading, writing and mathematics.

You and other leaders ensure that the curriculum is broad and enriching. Pupils enjoy learning in subjects other than English and mathematics. Teachers make meaningful links between English, art and history. For example, pupils were observed writing eye-witness accounts based around the artwork 'The Lady of Shalott', while other pupils wrote about a visit to Creswell Craggs, where they learned about the Stone Age. Consequently, pupils make strong connections in their learning and effectively recall and record the knowledge and information they have been taught. The quality of most pupils' work in subjects other than English and mathematics is excellent.

Pupils are well behaved, polite and respectful. During the inspection, pupils were regularly seen greeting staff with a friendly 'hello' and often held doors open for adults and other pupils. Pupils learn together harmoniously in lessons and enjoy sharing ideas and discussing their work. A typical comment from pupils was, 'Everyone in our school is a friend and we look after each other.'

The local governing body, together with the trust, is a cohesive and skilled team. They have a precise understanding of the school's performance and conduct insightful visits to school to meet with leaders and to check on the progress of the school's improvement priorities. They strongly challenge you and other senior leaders to ensure accountability. You value the support provided by both local governors and the trust. The use of 'peer reviews' across the trust has ensured that the school's own self-evaluation is accurate and reliable.

As an outcome of the predecessor school's previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve pupils' ability to solve word problems in mathematics. You and the senior leadership team have successfully addressed this area. The leader of mathematics has introduced a systematic and consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics, which effectively develops pupils' fluency, problem-solving and reasoning skills. Evidence from pupils' workbooks shows that pupils have many opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to solving problems.

You were also asked to provide further opportunities to improve pupils' skills in extended writing. Leaders have achieved this in most year groups, with some good examples of extended writing seen in key stage 2 pupils' English and topic workbooks. Leaders have worked successfully to develop pupils' use of ambitious vocabulary in their oracy work. However, some pupils still lack the stamina required to write at length and insufficiently apply the vocabulary they use verbally, in their writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have established an effective safeguarding culture throughout the school and ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are well trained in safeguarding and first aid and this knowledge is regularly updated. Staff are vigilant and recognise the signs that pupils may be suffering from abuse. You, other leaders and staff act quickly to identify pupils at risk of harm and refer them to external agencies for further support. When this support is not always forthcoming, leaders strive to provide 'in-house' support for pupils and families. For example, leaders have trained staff to provide art therapy for vulnerable pupils.

The local governing body and the trust ensure that rigorous monitoring systems are in place to check the suitability of people who work or volunteer in the school. All recruitment and vetting procedures are thorough and well documented. Pupils and parents say that pupils are safe in school. Pupils learn about a range of safeguarding issues across the curriculum, including online safety, fire awareness and how to care safely for animals. Pupils say staff care for them. They use the 'hand of five' to identify five members of staff to whom they would report their worries or concerns, confident something would be done to help them.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection I considered how effective leaders' actions are in improving the progress pupils make in reading and mathematics. Leaders have acted quickly to improve the quality of teaching in reading. A consistent and effective approach to teaching reading is embedded and is improving pupils' comprehension skills. Comprehension strategies are taught to help pupils understand what they read, including visualisation, identifying important phrases and 'getting the gist' techniques. These, coupled with the work of leaders to improve pupils' language and vocabulary, are having significant impact. For example, pupils in key stage 2 read, used and discussed the meaning of the words 'tolerate', 'reluctantly' and 'insubordination' when reading to the inspector.
- Leaders have introduced initiatives to increase pupils' enjoyment of reading and the frequency with which they read at home. For example, the 'reading around the world' initiative motivates pupils to read and earn points to visit different countries on their reading world map. Leaders have also developed a 'reading spine' which ensures that pupils are exposed to high-quality texts and reading materials, so they can acquire new language and debate the plots, events and themes which arise from these texts. Currently, all Year 6 pupils are reported to be on track to achieve the expected standard in reading by the end of key stage 2.
- The teaching of mathematics is strong in most year groups. Evidence from current pupils' workbooks shows that work is typically well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers use 'gap books' to ensure that any potential underachievement or gap in learning is identified early and used to inform future teaching. Pupils confidently solve problems and reason mathematically, using physical apparatus and imagery with increasing skill and confidence. The school's internal assessment systems show most pupils are on-

track to achieve the expected standard by the end of key stage 2.

- While pupils' progress is quickly improving in reading and mathematics in the early years and key stage 2, the pace of improvement in key stage 1 is slower. Some teachers do not always have a high-enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in these subjects, given pupils' starting points at the end of the early years.
- I also considered how well pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported to make their best possible progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The provision for pupils with SEND is a strength of the school's work. The SENCo passionately leads this area and is committed to ensuring that aspirations for pupils with SEND are high and they access learning alongside their peers. Leaders and staff act collectively with parents, to identify pupils with SEND as early as possible. Leaders and staff plan effective, tailored support for pupils with SEND including, one-to-one support, small group work and 'precision teaching'. A wide range of holistic therapies and support are provided for pupils with complex needs, such as the sensory gardening groups and 'BIO' (by invitation only) nurture groups. External agencies are used effectively to provide further support for pupils, including educational psychologists, counselling services, speech and language therapists and behaviour-support services.
- Teachers adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. They use adapted resources and physical apparatus to ensure that pupils with SEND fully participate in classroom activities with their peers. For example, pupils with dyslexia use coloured overlays to help them read texts, while pupils with autism spectrum disorder use visual timetables and 'now and next' cards to help structure their day and reduce anxiety. Parents of pupils with SEND fully support and value the work undertaken to support their children. A typical parental comment was, 'Staff go out of their way to help my child succeed. My child arrives at and leaves school with a big smile on their face each day.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers in key stage 1 raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve in English and mathematics, so more pupils access work which matches their abilities and they achieve more highly
- teachers continue to provide opportunities for pupils to write at length and apply the language and vocabulary they use verbally, in their written work.

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

Steve Varnam
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and other leaders. I held discussions with three members of the local governing body, including the chair and vice-chair, and with the chief executive officer of the trust. I observed learning jointly with you in the early years class and in Years 1, 2, 3 and 5. I scrutinised pupils' work in English and mathematics jointly with you and the deputy headteacher. I met with a group of key stage 2 pupils and listened to them read. I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation document, the school's plans for improvement, and documents relating to safeguarding. I observed behaviour around the school and in lessons. I met with a group of parents before the start of the school day and considered the 31 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. I considered 14 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.