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Mrs Chris Chorlton
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Dear Mrs Chorlton

Short inspection of Newtown Linford Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 June 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 April 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since then the school has converted to become an academy. It was one of the founding members of the Bradgate Education Partnership, a multi-academy trust. The school also works in close partnership with the STEP Teaching School Alliance, an organisation linked to the trust. In recent years the school roll has doubled in size. The school is currently undertaking a significant building programme designed to expand the school's estate.

The school is well led. The headteacher has a strong and accurate understanding of the key strengths and areas for development in the school. In recent years the staffing of the school has been stabilised and a number of new initiatives have been implemented which have impacted positively on the quality of education. Parents value the support provided by classroom professionals and report high levels of satisfaction with the school. The governing body has been recently reformed and is receiving good support from the trust. Governors demonstrate clear understanding of the priorities for improvement and report regularly to the board of trustees. Leaders at all levels demonstrate a clear and ambitious vision for children to achieve their potential and make a positive contribution to society.

The school values have considerable visibility around the school and are well understood by pupils. The school job centre advertises age-appropriate roles for which pupils are encouraged to apply. This enables the school to develop the confidence and teamwork skills enshrined in its values and prepares pupils well for

the next stage in their education. Pupils express clear understanding of the importance of fundamental British values and show pride in their tolerant, welcoming school. The school council has established high expectations for maintaining a high-quality school environment and is responsible for awarding a golden sweeper award for the best kept classroom. Staff provide a range of opportunities for pupils to participate in charitable and fundraising activities and provide a rich range of trips and clubs.

Since the last inspection leaders have improved consistency in the quality of teaching by seeking further opportunities to draw on best practice in other settings. Teachers are highly positive about the support provided by lead practitioners employed by the trust. Regular staff meetings also include a training and development element through which good practice can be shared.

Monitoring of the quality of teaching is a collaborative activity and is appropriately focused on the impact of planning on pupils' progress. Teachers demonstrate a good level of skill in designing activities which meet the needs of all pupils. They successfully overcome the challenges of making provision for pupils in mixed-age classes. Younger pupils reach for a raised level of expectation while their older peers delight in using coaching techniques to share their knowledge.

The most effective teachers use questioning effectively to check for misconceptions and provide verbal feedback in order to move pupils rapidly onto the next stage in their learning. Books are very well presented and, in line with the school's policy, include some evidence of the use of improvement prompts to secure understanding. Where pupils have been able to use this guidance to improve their work, progress has been strengthened. Securing the level of consistency in the provision of high-quality teaching throughout the school is now a key priority.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have developed an effective safeguarding culture including well-designed policies and procedures. The single central record is comprehensive, with clear evidence that appropriate checks take place to ensure safer recruitment practice. Responsibility for safeguarding is shared across members of the leadership team, who demonstrate good understanding of their responsibilities. Record-keeping is detailed and comprehensive. Staff receive appropriate training and regular updates about statutory changes and issues of public interest such as the involvement of young people in county lines activity.

All members of the school community have been trained to understand the specific threat of radicalisation in order to ensure that pupils are well informed and fully protected from extremism. The school receives appropriate support from external agencies, including an educational psychologist and school nurse. It maintains secure and detailed records for any pupil with additional medical needs and carefully controls the administration of medication.

Anti-bullying messages are clearly communicated throughout the school. Both

parents and pupils consider that the school provides a safe and welcoming environment and are clear about how to report concerns and get help. The school is proud of its work towards the local authority's Beyond Bullying Award and has high expectations for pupil behaviour and conduct. As a result, there are few incidents of challenging behaviour and these are well managed and recorded by staff.

Levels of attendance of pupils at the school have remained above the national average for some time. The school has implemented a robust attendance monitoring system and works closely with the local authority to manage persistent absences. Leaders are clear about the importance of swiftly identifying children missing in education. Clear messages about the impact of absence on progress and attainment are communicated through the school's chosen digital application.

Inspection findings

- Over the last three years, pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics by the end of key stage 2 have been lower than those of other pupils nationally. More recently, girls have also performed less strongly than boys. The leader for mathematics demonstrates a clear and accurate view of the quality of teaching of mathematics and has developed sharply focused improvement plans. Staff have benefited from significant training and development including the modelling of effective teaching of arithmetic.
- In the early years foundation stage pupils are introduced to problem-solving techniques which they are then able to build on as they move into key stage 1. Planning is undertaken with close reference to assessment information, which ensures that gaps in pupils' understanding are being addressed more swiftly.
- Pupils benefit from access to vibrant displays focused on supporting their recall of important mathematical knowledge. Throughout the school they have access to helpful resources to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts. As a result of this work, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in mathematics in all year groups is rapidly improving.
- At the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics were above the national averages. However, these outcomes were not replicated in the end-of-key-stage-2 tests.
- Leaders recognise the importance of securing further challenge in teaching. Curriculum planning uses creative hooks designed to promote pupils' imagination and secure engagement. In the Year 4/5 class, for example, pupils study the composition of the planets and write creatively about space travel and the opportunities presented by advances in technology.
- The most effective teachers grasp opportunities to extend pupils' thinking and promote their literacy skills. Pupils with additional needs are also well supported by skilled teaching assistants. It is clear that staff share detailed understanding of the needs of every child and are ambitious in their plans to prepare them for the next stage in their education. The proportion of pupils working at greater depth by the end of both key stages is steadily rising.
- In 2018, at the end of both key stages, the proportion of pupils attaining the

expected standard in writing exceeded the national average. For the last two years attainment in writing in key stage 1 has been in the top 10% of all schools. Pupils demonstrate strong skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling and many write at length with fluency. In the combined early years, Year 1 class, pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to practise early writing. A range of well-chosen resources, designed to promote pupils' skills in reading, sit alongside phonics displays. There is clear evidence that staff are cultivating a love of reading which extends from the youngest children and permeates all areas of the school. As a result, pupils' achievement in phonics and reading is rapidly improving.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard at the end of key stages 1 and 2 is increased
- the recent improvement in the outcomes for pupils in mathematics at key stage 2 is sustained
- they secure greater consistency in the provision of high-quality teaching across both key stages.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer 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

Emma Hollis-Brown
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and shared my lines of enquiry. I also met with the subject leader for mathematics and with the chair of the governing body. I considered the responses of parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, along with some free-text comments, and met with parents at the start of the school day. Together with you, I visited all classes in the school and considered pupils' work in books. I observed pupils' behaviour and met with a group of pupils to discuss their experiences of the school. I viewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance, its plans for further improvement and information on pupils' current progress. I considered a number of policy documents, including those related to safeguarding and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. I also considered recruitment checks in order to confirm the robustness of safer recruitment practice.

