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Elizabeth Blacklock  
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Dear Mrs Blacklock

### **Short inspection of St. Peter's Church of England Primary Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 13 March 2018, 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 June 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 your appointment in September 2016, you and other senior leaders have successfully led improvements to the quality of teaching and raised pupils' achievement. Together, you form a cohesive team. Staff and governors value your good work. Parents appreciate the community feel of the school. As one explained: 'There is a wonderful sense of community in the school where everyone is welcome.' Another parent described how, 'The teachers can't do enough for the children.'

You have accurately evaluated the school's strengths and areas for development. You have a clear plan for improvement and you work effectively with the deputy headteacher to tackle weaknesses. You make frequent checks on the quality of teaching and provide training and support for staff where needed. You hold teachers rigorously to account for the progress their pupils are making. This sharp focus on securing good-quality teaching throughout the school is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement, especially at the end of key stage 2. The proportion of pupils meeting or exceeding the standards expected for their age by the end of Year 6 in 2017 was higher than that seen nationally. Teachers are now setting more challenging work for the most able pupils.

Analysis of the school's own assessment data and pupils' work shows that most pupils are making good progress in each year group in reading, writing and mathematics. The quality of pupils' work, however, varies between classes. You have already identified this and are tackling the issue.

The teaching of reading is a strength of the school and pupils are making good progress. Pupils told me about their passion for books. One boy talked about a book the class had been reading and said: 'The conditions that boy had to endure in a sweatshop were horrendous. He was so brave, it made me think what I would do in that situation.' In the early years, the story of the gingerbread man had been used as an exciting stimulus for the children's writing. You recognise and are keen to nurture this love of books. Nevertheless, the teaching of phonics is not as secure.

Senior leaders have developed the curriculum thoughtfully. It provides engaging topics and places a high emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Staff make sure that the school is a vibrant and attractive environment. They celebrate pupils' achievements, both academic and personal, through displays and during assemblies. Consequently, pupils feel valued and are motivated to achieve highly.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development remains a strength of the school. Pupils are polite, well mannered and courteous. They are extremely proud of their school and were keen to tell me about all the good things that are happening. Pupils participate in a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, particularly in sport and music. For example, pupils enjoy an outdoor table tennis club starting at 7.30am. All classes complete a walk of one mile each day. You have ensured that the physical education and sport premium is used effectively.

Pupils told me that they are very happy at this school. They feel safe and know that, if there is ever a problem, they can always trust the teachers and support staff to listen and to help them. Pupils said there is very little bullying but if they feel they are being bullied they can talk to the anti-bullying key worker, who will help them to sort things out.

Leaders have successfully tackled the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Pupils now have more opportunities to write at length and to develop their ability to write for a range of purposes and audiences. The most able pupils are challenged to achieve well across a range of subjects. Senior leaders show the capacity for further improvement.

Governors know the school well. The board of academy trustees, which is the governing body for the school, holds you and other staff to account. For example, it checks progress with the key actions identified on the plan for improvement.

Middle leadership is at an early stage of development. Leaders responsible for literacy and numeracy are attending training to develop their leadership skills in their subjects. Not all subject leaders, however, are improving practice in their subjects at the same rate. This means that teaching is not consistent across all subjects. You have identified the need to develop and strengthen middle leadership across the school. You see this as a key part in developing leadership to support the school's future.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and the governing body have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The safeguarding and the well-being of pupils are of the utmost priority. Effective training for staff is in place and they are aware of the latest safeguarding guidance. Records are detailed and secure. Leaders and other staff know individual pupils and families well. They liaise with external agencies and actively seek help for families. Parents said they felt that they could come and talk to you or other members of staff if they had a concern. One parent explained how kind and supportive the school had been when her family was going through a very difficult time.

You have made sure that pupils know who to speak to in school if they are worried. They also have an understanding of how to keep themselves safe through a range of curriculum activities, including when online and using new technologies.

## **Inspection findings**

- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities have not been making fast enough progress in the past. Changes to the programme of support for these pupils and better teaching mean that they are now achieving more. The SEN coordinator knows the pupils very well. She has accurately identified their needs. She resolutely seeks support from outside agencies to help pupils who have more complex needs. The school's intervention programmes are used effectively. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to supporting pupils in class. In lessons, adults have high expectations of these pupils and maintain consistently positive and respectful relationships. In Year 6, pupils with SEN and/or disabilities engaged well in an interesting and exciting lesson about the death of Napoleon. The teacher had planned resources carefully and gave the pupils opportunities to speak before they wrote about what they had learned. Parents spoke positively about the support that their children receive. They are fully involved in reviewing their children's progress.
- Leaders have reduced the proportion of fixed-term exclusions in the last year. Governors and senior leaders are crystal clear about their vision for all pupils to attend school. They are committed to inclusion. Where it is necessary to exclude a pupil, staff work closely with parents and outside agencies to support the pupil to continue with their work and to return to school as quickly as possible. The school works assiduously to use exclusion as a last resort.
- You took successful action to reverse a recent rise in pupils' absence, particularly among those who are persistently absent. This group includes disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Senior leaders check on the pupils whose attendance is below the national average, and have created an action plan for each pupil in this group. To support this work, you have made resources available for an education welfare officer, who works closely with families to help improve attendance. Good attendance is promoted via the weekly newsletter. As a result, attendance has improved and is currently above average.

- The proportions of pupils in Year 6 who attained the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics in 2017 were above the national averages. In 2017, standards at the end of Year 2 improved from those in 2016, particularly in reading. The proportion of pupils in Year 2 who reached the higher standard for reading was above average. Pupils' attainment in mathematics was similar to that found nationally, but standards in writing were just below average. The proportion of children in 2017 who attained a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year was in line with the national average.
- Standards in the phonics screening test in Year 1 have not improved markedly in the last three years and remain below average. You and other senior leaders have identified the teaching of phonics as an area for improvement. You have introduced a new approach to the teaching of phonics. Staff have received training and you have helped parents to see how they can support their child at home. At this stage, however, the teaching of phonics is not improving quickly enough. Consequently, not enough pupils are reaching the standard expected for their age. You draw on support from other schools to provide more specific professional development for staff in this area.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Teachers improve their teaching of phonics so that a greater proportion of pupils are able to meet the expected standard at the end of Year 1.
- Leaders responsible for subjects develop their skills to secure consistently strong teaching in their area of responsibility.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the director of education for the Diocese of Leicester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lindsay Alldis  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, other leaders and governors to discuss the school's progress since the last inspection. I also spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority and a member of the Leicester Diocese Board of Education. I met with groups of parents and carers at the beginning of the school day. I spoke with pupils informally during the day and held a meeting with a group of pupils from a range of year groups. I scrutinised a wide range of information, including policies and records relating to safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation, its plans for improvement and its review of spending on the pupil premium spending

and the PE and sports premium. I looked at assessment information for previous year groups and those pupils currently in the school. I considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and Ofsted's free-text service. Together, we did a focused walk around the whole school and observed learning in several classes.