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Mrs Helen Goulder
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Goulder

Short inspection of Croughton All Saints CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 May 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 October 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You became the headteacher shortly prior to the previous inspection and have ensured that the curriculum and the school grounds have been extended and enhanced to meet the changing characteristics of your school community. The school is very popular with parents and carers, with many choosing to travel a considerable distance to ensure that their children can attend the school. The increased mobility of pupils has brought its own challenges, which you have recognised and responded to effectively.

Leaders and governors know the school well and you have undertaken appropriate actions to respond to the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. You are focused on providing the best possible education for your pupils and you are ambitious for the school's future. You and your teaching team work closely with other schools in the local cluster. This approach helps you to moderate academic judgements and to improve teaching and learning.

The school has a warm and welcoming ethos, with many examples of displays and artefacts which celebrate pupils' work, their achievements and the school's ethos. Strong social and moral values permeate all of school life, and the pupils are proud of their school and care for each other. One parent who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, aptly described how 'the school's ethos and values resonate throughout the school's core and all pupils promote these'.

The behaviour of pupils, in and out of lessons, is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and wear their uniforms with pride. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are very positive, and they show respect for adults and for each other. Pupils take on many positions of responsibility to help enhance school life. They speak warmly of the school council, their houses and the pupil-led worship committee, where pupils help to lead assemblies, choose the music and write their own prayers, which are shared with their peers. Such initiatives help prepare the pupils effectively for life in modern Britain.

Outcomes at the end of Year 6 have generally been above or close to national averages since the last inspection. The school has quite small cohorts, which makes trends over time less meaningful to measure, particularly because a considerable proportion of pupils join or leave the school during their primary years. However, you know the school and your pupils very well and maintain thorough case studies for each cohort and the individual pupils therein. This helps you to identify any dips in attainment or progress made.

Safeguarding is effective.

As the designated person for safeguarding, you have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and the records kept are detailed and of high quality. You are ably supported in this role by the school business manager, who is knowledgeable and experienced, and knows the pupils and families well. You both ensure that all appropriate checks take place before adults start to work or volunteer in the school. The arrangements are reviewed regularly with the safeguarding governor, and you are tenacious in seeking ways to ensure that any risks that pupils may face are recognised and their impact minimised. Staff and governors' safeguarding training is up to date and includes consideration of the school's role in fulfilling expectations with respect to the 'Prevent' duty.

Pupils and their parents say that they feel the school is a safe place. The pupils are confident that the adults in the school can be relied upon to deal with any problems or concerns they may have. Behaviour logs are detailed and thorough, with few incidents recorded. Pupils are taught how to stay safe when using the internet.

Attendance at the school has improved and is now above that of schools nationally. Rates of persistent absence have risen recently. This is partly due to a spate of illness. You monitor rates of attendance regularly and work closely with the small number of families where there are concerns.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need further development. School improvement planning is detailed and relevant, with identification of specific actions for individual personnel and clear timescales to work towards. You embrace opportunities to work with other local schools, which helps to strengthen and inform the monitoring activities undertaken and to ensure that your assessments are

accurate. You agreed with me that an appropriate next step will be to develop the middle leadership structure, as newer members of staff become established in the school. This move should help to distribute some of the wide range of roles which are currently shared between yourself and the senior teacher.

- Governors demonstrate a wide range of useful and pertinent skills, and they understand their respective roles well. Governors demonstrate an effective balance between challenging and supporting school leaders. They help to ensure that additional funding is spent appropriately.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school during their primary years is quite high. This has impacted negatively on the overall progress and attainment measures over time. You work well to support these pupils and carry out detailed comparisons of the achievements of those pupils who have been at the school throughout their primary years and those newer to the school. A parent spoke of the very positive improvements seen in her young son, socially and academically, since moving to Croughton All Saints in recent months.
- One of the key lines of enquiry for this inspection was to consider whether the most able pupils were being sufficiently challenged, particularly in mathematics. Work in pupils' books and speaking with individuals reassured me that there is much evidence of pupils rising to the many challenges set. However, there are instances when pupils new to the school have gaps in their knowledge or skills, which impact on their work in class and end-of-key-stage assessments. You agreed with me that ensuring consistency in the approaches taken by all teachers to support these pupils should be another next step for the school.
- In 2017, the outcomes for pupils were generally in line with national averages. The number of pupils who achieved the phonics standard in Year 1 was above that of pupils nationally. Again, in key stage 1 the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected and higher standards was above the national average. In key stage 2, attainment was generally in line with that of pupils nationally, although no pupils achieved greater depth in mathematics. However, the progress made in all subjects was as good as, or better than, national averages.
- The school's current tracking information shows that the majority of pupils are making good progress towards the targets set for them by their teachers. Leaders have developed a clear and informative assessment system, which helps to ensure that all pupils receive focused and individualised support to achieve to the best of their abilities.
- Children in the early years foundation stage do not always reach the good levels of development expected for children of this age. You provided detail of the unique circumstances of your intake, which helps explain this, and the situation has been compounded by a lack of consistency in staffing in recent times. However, you have taken appropriate actions to help secure better outcomes, and a greater proportion of children are now on track to reach expected or better levels. Children enjoy a rich learning environment, with activities planned to support and challenge them across the curriculum. For instance, some children were learning about the life cycle of a bee when I visited the class, and they were using a number of scientific words to describe the process. Alongside this, others were undertaking a variety of physical, writing, mathematical and craft

activities around the same theme. It was agreed that sustaining these improvements will be another next step for the school.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well, in and out of lessons. You utilise a number of specialist services to support and extend pupils with specific needs. As a result, these pupils generally make good progress.
- The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent well, although you acknowledge that the small numbers of pupils mean this funding has to be targeted carefully to support their individual learning. As a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils by the end of key stage 2 is generally in line with, and often better than, that of other pupils in the school and nationally.
- The school grounds are secure and impressive. There are a variety of levels and activities built into these, with an outdoor amphitheatre, large playground areas, a tepee, willow sculptures, vegetable gardens, a forest school area and a small flock of chickens. The grounds are used well and clearly enjoyed by the pupils to enhance the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. One parent summed up 'the healthy balance of learning throughout all the subjects and many extra-curricular opportunities for all pupils'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- outcomes in the early years foundation stage improve so that a greater proportion of children are better prepared for key stage 1
- teachers in all classes take a consistent approach to ensuring that any gaps in pupils' prior learning are rectified promptly, so that more pupils make accelerated progress and are enabled to work at a greater depth, particularly in mathematics
- the role of middle leaders is developed further to share more leadership responsibilities and to strengthen subject leaders' skills in checking the progress that pupils make across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Yvonne Watts
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the senior teacher on several occasions. I shared my key lines of enquiry with you at the outset of the inspection. I also met the chair of governors and other members of the governing body. I met with a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6, and spoke with many other pupils informally. I considered the 44 responses received on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the six responses to a staff survey. The views of the 19 pupils who completed a pupil survey were also taken into account.

Together, we visited the classes to see the learning that was taking place and I revisited classes again in the afternoon. Although the Years 3 and 4 pupils were out of school on a pre-arranged visit, I looked at a considerable sample of their work. Together with yourself and the senior teacher, I looked at examples of pupils' English and mathematics books from all year groups, and the learning logs of the youngest children. I observed the behaviour of pupils in and out of lessons, on the playground and in the dining hall. I looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation summary and improvement planning, assessment information, the pupil premium strategy, and documentation relating to safeguarding.