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Mrs Marie Waring
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Waring

Short inspection of Scalford Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 October 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 April 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 have continued to develop the school as a highly inclusive and welcoming community. Parents and carers are strongly supportive of the school's ethos. They feel that their children make good progress in a setting that fosters the values of kindness and respect. Pupils are excited to come to school and are ready to learn. Alongside your high standards of pastoral care, you are raising expectations of what each pupil can achieve through your work with staff, families and the wider community.

The staff team feel well supported, and morale is high. They share your vision of trying to provide the very best quality of education for each pupil. Staff value the opportunities they have had to make their teaching better. They are keen to share their learning to support and challenge each other to improve. For example, at the staff 'book club', they share with each other children's books that they have read. This helps them to keep their knowledge up to date and build good links between reading and the wider curriculum.

Together with staff, you have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced. Younger pupils explore the outdoor environment. They use the language that they have developed through these experiences in their writing and art work. Teachers plan to extend pupils' understanding, for example through providing opportunities

for them to learn about people who have different faiths from their own. Regular events, such as 'Messy Fiesta', enable pupils to work with others from different year groups to learn about the school's values. For example, pupils explore the value of 'service' through making poppies, writing letters to soldiers and baking biscuits to give to the Royal British Legion.

Pupils develop strong creative skills because of the way in which the curriculum is interconnected. Children in the Reception Year use the colours that they have seen in an autumn walk around the village to describe the dinosaurs that they are painting. Pupils use their experience of painting with charcoal on a Stone Age-themed day to create careful art work. Pupils have opportunities to reflect during collective worship and to discuss the meaning of true friendship and how they can help each other. Older pupils enjoy the responsibility of helping the youngest to walk to the village hall each day. The school is a happy and cooperative community.

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to improve the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Since that time, the proportion of pupils who attend the school who have SEN and/or disabilities has increased. Pupils' additional needs are quickly identified. You have ensured that they continue to benefit from good-quality class teaching as well as receiving appropriate support at other times throughout the day. All tasks are thoughtfully matched to support pupils' next steps for learning. As a result, pupils develop independence and make strong progress from their individual starting points.

The areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection focused on ensuring that the most able pupils are challenged effectively in their learning. Since the last inspection, the teaching of mathematics has improved. Challenges are embedded throughout the mathematics curriculum. Teachers were observed to use these challenges to adapt the learning to stretch the most able during lessons. Other challenges are set to provide goals for pupils to work towards. There is a palpable buzz about learning in these lessons.

Teachers ensure that reading books provide appropriate challenge to pupils and help them to develop higher-order reading skills. Recently, teachers have increased the opportunities for pupils to write at length. However, these are not sufficiently well planned to allow the most able pupils to further refine their writing skills. Expectations of what the most able writers could produce are not consistently high enough.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are all fully aware of the part that they play in keeping all pupils safe. Regular training keeps staff up to date with developments. Staff monitor the well-being of pupils and know how they should record concerns. Careful record-keeping shows the tenacity that leaders have shown in seeking solutions that support children and families at times of need. Attendance has remained higher than the national average for the past three years.

Pupils I spoke with were aware of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they know how to cross roads with care; they understand how to keep themselves safe online and know that they must speak to an adult if they receive a message that makes them feel uncomfortable. Pupils did not feel that there is any bullying at the school. They felt strongly that teachers are always willing to help them to resolve any problems and that any unkindness demonstrated by pupils will not be tolerated. All parents that I spoke with, and who responded to the online survey, felt that their children feel safe in school.

Inspection findings

- The quality of teaching and learning in the early years has improved. Provisional information for 2018 indicates that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has risen. The early years leader carefully identifies next steps for the children. She monitors the effect of interventions to check that children are quickly catching up. Staff share assessments frequently, and as children develop, staff adapt the next steps for learning. These are shared regularly with parents, who also contribute their observations. Children make good progress from their starting points and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Teachers in Year 1 use assessment information well so that pupils build on the strong foundations set in the early years. For example, phonics lessons build swiftly on prior learning in the early years. Apart from a dip in 2017, proportions of pupils who reach the required standard in the phonics screening check are typically above the national average. Provisional assessment information for 2018 suggests that this may be much higher than the national average.
- The proportions of pupils in key stage 1 who attain the expected standard and the higher standard are broadly in line with the national average. Pupils make good progress from their starting points at the end of early years. Staff plan pupils' learning carefully, and successful interventions enable some pupils to make particularly strong progress from lower starting points.
- Provisional assessment information indicates that the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 rose in 2018 and is above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. All pupils have attained the expected standard in writing for the past two years. However, no pupils have attained the higher standard in writing in the past three years.
- Leaders have improved the opportunities that pupils have to write for a variety of real purposes. For example, older pupils write the nativity play for the younger pupils to perform. However, these tasks do not always provide opportunities for the most able to fully develop their skills. Not all pupils continue to write with a fluent joined-up script when they have learned this skill. As a result, sometimes pupils' work is not presented as well as it might be.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school is very small. Leaders use additional funding to support each individual's needs effectively. Leaders monitor the effect of this carefully and speak with parents about the progress that their children are making. Teachers have high expectations of these pupils, who are

successfully engaged in their learning. Scrutiny of workbooks and the school's own assessment information show that, over time, these pupils make good progress from their starting points.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their individual starting points. Leaders have developed strong partnerships with external agencies, such as an alternative provider. Teachers use advice and their own careful observations to ensure that pupils receive well-tailored support to make good progress. Leaders are ambitious for pupils, where possible, to catch up with their peers. Pupils' emotional needs are well catered for. Parents are pleased with the regular communication with staff and the progress that their children are making.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers challenge the most able pupils consistently so that a greater proportion achieve the highest standard in writing of which they are capable
- all staff expect pupils to write in a consistently clear and fluent style.

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

Yours sincerely

Hazel Henson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and other leaders in the school. I spoke with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I spoke with four members of teaching staff and a member of staff at an alternative provision (New Leaf Triangle). I met with a group of five pupils and considered the responses to pupil surveys. I observed learning jointly with you in the three class bases. I scrutinised with you and senior leaders a selection of pupils' workbooks. I examined a range of the school's documentation, including its self-evaluation document, development plan and documents related to safeguarding. I observed behaviour around the school during the day. I considered the views of parents by speaking with them before school. I analysed the 24 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.