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Mrs Jane Stalham
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Stalham

Short inspection of Sproughton Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 January 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 November 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 you took up post in September 2018, you have worked collaboratively with the head of school improvement from the multi-academy trust to develop a clear and effective plan for school improvement. You have identified areas for development and swiftly put in place actions that are improving teaching and learning across the school.

The school ethos of 'let your light shine' is demonstrated by staff and embraced by pupils. Pupils display wonderful relationships. They are supportive of each other and their behaviour is exemplary. In all classes I visited I saw pupils who were engaged in their learning and developing a strong desire to learn. For example, I asked some pupils which skills they had learned while making their puppets and their response was 'collaboration and perseverance'.

The vast majority of parents and carers are very pleased with the school. I received 53 responses through Ofsted's Parent View survey, with 91% recommending the school to another parent. It is clear through parental comments that they feel their children are taught well, kept safe and that they receive valuable and useful information from the school.

The trust and governors know the school well. They provide valuable support and ensure that Sproughton maintains its own identity while also benefiting from the opportunities that being part of the trust provides. The support that the school

improvement adviser provides has enabled one of your teachers to become a 'school to school' support teacher due to the high-quality practice she delivers. Staff also benefit from opportunities to check their judgements about pupils' learning with teachers in other schools, which supports their professional development.

The school provides a well-balanced, broad curriculum, ensuring that pupils learn about different beliefs, cultures and religions. In the whole-school assembly, the pupils were taught about the Holocaust in an age-appropriate, sensitive way. Poignant questions were posed, and the pupils responded with considered, thoughtful answers. The school council were adamant that they would recommend their school to others and talked honestly about what good friends they have and how 'everyone is friendly at our school'.

Teaching is good and pupils' attainment and progress are usually good in national tests at key stages 1 and 2. In 2018, the number of children attaining national standards in some areas of the school dropped. However, this was only for one year and small cohorts can have a significant effect on percentage outcomes. Due to the small numbers, these pupils could be easily identified, and leaders are striving to ensure that very best teaching in the school is consistent, so pupils are challenged appropriately.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school has a strong culture for keeping children safe. All safeguarding requirements are carried out effectively. The school has three trained safeguarding leaders. The designated safeguarding leader is well organised and committed to ensuring that all staff are trained regularly and that procedures are well established and implemented.

All staff provide effective pastoral support for pupils and pupils themselves talked confidently about having someone to talk to should they need to. Pupils also talked confidently about how to stay safe online and that if there was ever a problem they knew that staff would deal with it quickly.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was about what leaders are doing to ensure that most pupils reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Leaders have quickly identified the need to focus on phonics, as the number of children achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2018 dropped from 2017. The school has put in place an action plan to ensure that the delivery of phonics is rigorous and accurate and that pupils receive a consistent curriculum that enables them to develop their understanding of letters and sounds. Evidence in lessons showed that pupils were able to confidently blend sounds together and apply these skills to their reading. However, some groups of pupils are learning sounds which they already know. They are not being moved on swiftly and challenged further so that they make strong progress in reading and writing.

- The school has worked with an early years consultant who has helped to refine the teaching of phonics. Pupils across key stage 1 are now actively taking part in phonics sessions and therefore motivated and enthusiastic in their learning. The organisation of phonics teaching is well planned, with pupils reading words that they frequently come across, learning new sounds, practising them and then applying their skills in reading and writing.
- In Reception, children apply their phonics knowledge in their writing. They show confident phonics skills when reading and already demonstrate the Sproughton 'resilience' ethos. One child told me that just like 'Gerard the Giraffe' she never gives up and keeps on trying when reading.
- My second line of enquiry was about how leaders are ensuring appropriate challenge is in place across the school, so more pupils learn at greater depth. Leaders have quickly identified a need to improve this and have put in place actions as part of the school development plan to support pupils. Leaders are setting higher targets for pupils to aim for so that more exceed the expected standard at key stage 1 and key stage 2 and they are checking to see if pupils are reaching them.
- In one class, I saw a super example of pupils being challenged in their writing to use sophisticated punctuation and grammar when writing a diary extract linked to their topic. It was also clear to see that the teacher had taught an effective sequence of writing skills to enable pupils to apply their skills at a greater depth.
- In upper key stage 2, expectations for attainment in reading are high. Pupils complete a quiz linked to the reading book and are expected to score at least 85%. If they miss this target they receive help from their peers and other additional support before retaking the quiz. Outcomes from this system show excellent results.
- Leaders have also developed a structure for lessons and introduced an approach to the teaching of mathematics that allows children to explain their reasoning and develop their fluency when problem-solving. These actions, along with strong support for pupils from teaching assistants, are helping the pupils to access more challenging learning and therefore moving more pupils into greater depth. However, to enable all groups of pupils to access more challenging learning, the school needs to ensure that best practice is shared so teaching is consistently strong in all phases.
- My third line of enquiry was about how leaders are ensuring that high outcomes are sustained across the school in all areas. In 2018, attainment in the good level of development for children in Reception, outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check and the key stage 1 national tests in reading, writing and mathematics all dropped below national average.
- Leaders have identified that teaching and the curriculum must meet pupils' needs and teachers' assessments must be used effectively to ensure good progress is made. By working with other schools in the trust and developing a consistent approach to teaching and learning across the school, it is clear to see that outcomes for pupils are improving. However, to ensure that outcomes improve from 2018, leaders are continuing to monitor performance and ensure that

successful teaching strategies are used to support all groups of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- opportunities for pupils to be challenged in their learning continue to develop across the school so more pupils attain at a greater depth or higher standard
- best practice is shared across the school so high-quality teaching and learning is consistent in all phases.

I am copying this letter to the chief executive officer, the director of education for the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

David Milligan
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with you, your senior teachers, head of school improvement for the trust, the safeguarding lead, the school's business manager, governors, pupils, the school council and staff. We observed learning and teaching in Reception, key stage 1 and key stage 2. I also heard pupils from Years 2, 4 and 6 read. I looked at a range of documents including your self-evaluation and the school development plan, the single central register and pupils' files. I also looked at a range of books across the school. I scrutinised 53 responses from Parent View, eight responses to the online staff questionnaire and 50 responses to the online pupil questionnaire.