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Mrs Kathryn King
Acting Executive Headteacher
Norwell CofE Primary School
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Dear Mrs King

Short inspection of Norwell CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 February 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 the school was judged to be good in June 2015.

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 to the post of acting executive headteacher in January 2018, you have demonstrated strong leadership in improving and developing the school. You have restructured leadership roles within the school and have very quickly established a strong teamwork approach to school development. Staff and governors share this vision and are enthusiastic about the future of the school. With their support, you have ensured that you and your staff team provide a safe, nurturing environment where pupils are challenged and helped to achieve their best.

Pupils and parents value the 'family feel' of a small village school. Pupils told me that this is a friendly school where new pupils are welcomed. They described the school as being 'a fun environment where everyone feels included'. Their behaviour is excellent and reflects the values that the school actively seeks to promote. They try hard, cooperate well with each other and are keen to do well.

Pupils enjoy the many learning opportunities that the school provides. They spoke with enthusiasm about the visits and activities that they experience. They value the opportunities to take part in sporting activities with other schools and appreciate the residential visits that are organised for them.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They feel that teachers know their children well and that the quality of teaching helps their children become

confident learners who make strong progress. Several parents spoke to me about the individual care and support that they and their child had received. They felt they were always made to feel welcome in school and that you and the staff team were approachable and friendly.

Members of the governing body know the school well and provide you with appropriate challenge and support. They have an accurate knowledge of the school and know what needs to be done to further develop the quality of education. They check the work of the school regularly by observing lessons, looking at pupils' work and by talking to pupils and parents. This ensures that they have a good overview of the school. They demonstrate a strong commitment to helping the school to improve further.

At the time of the last inspection leaders were asked to build upon the collaborative working between the partner schools to share high-quality teaching practice and skills. The school was federated with St Matthew's C of E Primary School to become the Kite Primary Federation in 2016. The federated schools have a joint governing body and an executive headteacher with responsibility for both schools.

With the support of the governing body you have restructured staffing teams to create subject leadership roles with responsibilities across both schools. This has strengthened leadership capacity within the school. Staff teams from the two schools now work more closely together. This has broadened the curriculum and improved the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils participate in a wide range of educational visits and activities together and take part as a team in sports events with other schools. They also experience a wide range of skills and experiences through joint residential visits and planned outdoor learning experiences.

Leaders were also asked to accelerate pupils' progress by consistently giving pupils work at the right level to enable them to make the best possible progress. Leaders have successfully addressed this in reading and writing. Progress in writing has improved. In the last academic year pupils at the end of key stage 2 were judged to be making progress that was well above that achieved nationally. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher standard in writing at the end of key stage 2 has been above national for the past three years.

Progress in reading in key stage 2 has also improved. Leaders have ensured that pupils get off to strong start in reading in the foundation stage and key stage 1. The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 1 has been consistently above the national level. Attainment in reading at the end of key stage 1 has also improved, with all pupils reaching the expected standard and a higher percentage of pupils achieving greater depth than the national level. Although progress scores in reading at the end of key stage 2 are steadily increasing they still remain average in comparison with those of other schools nationally. Leaders have recognised this as an area for continued improvement and have put in place strategies to improve pupils' reading comprehension skills.

Progress and attainment in mathematics across key stage 2 has been less secure and until last year was below that achieved nationally. Consequently mathematics forms a key priority in the school's improvement plan and this was an area that we looked at closely together during the inspection.

The previous inspection report also highlighted the need to build parental involvement in their children's learning. You have successfully addressed this by involving parents in subject café workshops. These provide information and support about how subjects are taught, to enable parents to support their child's learning. In addition you have introduced a communication platform to enhance communication between teachers and parents. As a result, parents feel that communication between home and school is strong. Every parent that responded to the parental questionnaire would recommend this school to another parent.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding and leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You ensure that all staff and volunteers are appropriately checked before they start to work or volunteer at the school. Induction procedures for new staff appointments are thorough.

All staff receive regular training and are knowledgeable about safeguarding. They spoke of the need to be aware of pupils who may be most at risk and the need to be vigilant. They know how to record and refer their concerns. Child protection issues are followed up diligently and records are stored securely. The safeguarding governor checks safeguarding records regularly.

Pupils told me that they feel safe in school. They report that bullying is rare and that it is dealt with quickly when it happens. They are taught about e-safety and spoke confidently to me about how to stay safe online.

Inspection findings

- You and the governing body have accurately identified areas for continued school improvement. You have a detailed action plan in place to address areas of concern and this is clearly understood by all staff. The school improvement plan has clear targets, timescales and responsibilities to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning across all subjects continues to improve.
- You monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and assessment effectively and have developed the roles of subject leaders to build leadership capacity across both partnership schools. This is not yet fully effective because leaders are new to their roles and consequently are unable to evaluate accurately the impact of new strategies on pupils' learning.
- The mathematics lead has accessed training in mathematics mastery and has led training for staff in this approach. You have also introduced a new mathematics scheme this term. The mathematics lead is new to her role and has begun to take part in lesson observations, but has not yet looked at pupils' work to evaluate the impact of these new initiatives. These need more time to be

embedded into current practice and adapted to suit the needs of mixed-year classes to ensure that they accelerate pupils' progress.

- Together we looked at progress and attainment in mathematics across all class groups. The school's tracking system shows that in most year groups, more pupils are working at or above age-related expectations. In the mathematics lessons that we observed together, we saw that pupils made the strongest progress when teachers modelled new ideas carefully and challenged pupils to reason and apply their learning.
- We also looked at the work in pupils' writing and mathematics books. This showed that pupils are effectively challenged in their writing and as a result strong progress is evident. Pupils experience a wide range of writing activities linked to the curriculum and are helped to correct and redraft their work. Pupils have pride in their work and take care with their presentation and handwriting. In mathematics work, we saw that in some year groups there was evidence of increasing challenge for the more able pupils but this was not consistently done in all classes.
- Since the last inspection, attendance had declined to be below that of similar schools nationally. You are aware of this and have taken steps to address this. You have developed clear procedures to monitor and promote good attendance and, as a result, attendance has risen to be above national this year. You recognise that attendance needs to be consistently monitored to ensure that it continues to improve.
- You have given careful thought to the curriculum to ensure that it broadens pupils' experiences and provides high quality learning opportunities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Topics are chosen to develop pupils' thinking skills and to encourage debate. Older pupils achieve the 'Archbishop of York Young Leaders Award'. All pupils learn to play the ukulele and have access to individual music tuition for different instruments. Respect for different cultures and religions is fostered through visits to different places of worship, visitors to school and through the wider curriculum. Pupils are involved in choosing and promoting the values that they want to see in school and these are recognised by them in the weekly rewards assemblies. This creates a tolerant and respectful school community. Pupils told me that 'everyone deserves to be treated with respect'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to develop the role and accountability of subject leaders so that they take greater responsibility for leading improvements in their subject areas
- they continue to improve progress in mathematics by ensuring that new strategies are consistently implemented and evaluated.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Southwell, the regional schools commissioner and the director of

children's services for Nottinghamshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Hawkes
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and subject leaders with responsibility for mathematics and English. I also met with two governors including the chair of governors and spoke on the telephone with the local authority area effectiveness officer. I visited all of the classrooms with you and we looked at pupils' work together. I spoke with pupils informally during lessons and formally during a group discussion. I also observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons. I examined a range of documents including safeguarding records and policies, information relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour and the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan. I took into account the 14 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 14 responses to Ofsted's free-text service. I also spoke with a small number of parents at the start of the school day and considered the nine responses to the staff survey and the 14 responses to the pupil survey.