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Miss Joanna Scott
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Dear Miss Scott

Short inspection of Great Glen St Cuthbert's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 September 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 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since the previous inspection there have been considerable changes in staffing. Upon the retirement of the headteacher at the end of the summer term, you took up the position of acting headteacher. A new headteacher has been appointed and will start in January 2019. There have been changes to teaching staff and several teachers are new to the school or to the age of the pupils they are teaching.

The school environment is bright and welcoming. Pupils say they are happy at school, and this is confirmed by parents and carers. The curriculum is enriched by projects such as Take One Picture in conjunction with the National Gallery, the Jaguar Project, and partnership with a school in Tanzania. Pupils generally behave well in lessons and their attitudes towards learning are positive. At times, however, during the inspection, noise levels in classrooms rose and some pupils found it hard to concentrate on their work. Pupils say that they are 'kind to each other' – they help each other in lessons and on the playground. Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming.

In your role as acting headteacher you are supported by a newly established leadership team and a committed governing body. A school improvement adviser

from the local authority is also working with you. You recognise that the school's overall performance has declined and have an accurate view of what needs to be done to improve. You have updated the school improvement plan so that it reflects the current priorities and the actions you are taking. You intend to make this plan more succinct so that leaders and governors can monitor its impact more effectively.

Leaders have made checks on the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils. You recognise that this process has not been rigorous enough to ensure that any issues were identified and addressed quickly. As a result, outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have fallen and pupils did not make the progress, particularly in reading and mathematics, that they should. In-school assessment information indicates that this is also true for other year groups. You are changing the way that you track and monitor pupils' attainment so that teachers are given clearer advice on how to help pupils make better progress. It is too soon to see the impact of these actions.

At the last inspection, leaders were asked to make sure that questioning makes an effective contribution to improving pupils' learning throughout the school. You have provided staff with training and the opportunity to work alongside other teachers to develop this element of their work. Your records of checks on teaching indicate that this aspect had improved. However, you recognise that you need to revisit this training due to staffing changes.

You were also asked to ensure that the work pupils undertake challenges them appropriately. Pupils say that the work is 'easy enough to be enjoyable'. They are particularly positive about mathematics. However, school assessment information, national test results and your own checks on pupils' work indicate that there is more to be done to ensure that the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding systems are thorough and fit for purpose. You place a high importance on this area of your work. The many staff I spoke with all recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

You provide staff with frequent and relevant training so that they know what to do if they have any concerns. There is a clear process in place for all new staff, including a thorough induction programme.

Most parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and who spoke with me on the playground agree that their children are happy at school and feel secure. Pupils receive a good grounding in how to keep themselves safe and recognise risk. This includes visits from the police, and regular information about how to stay safe online and deal with cyber bullying. They are fully aware of the dangers of providing personal information when using the internet. The pupils I spoke with said that bullying does not happen often in their school and is usually quickly resolved. Pupils told me they feel safe in school although they have a few concerns about the boisterous play of some pupils at break and lunchtime. You are aware of this and monitor the situation closely. You are already working to increase

supervision at these times.

The governing body understands its responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and ensures that the appropriate checks are completed to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.

Inspection findings

- Children enter the school in Reception with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They settle into school quickly and make good progress. The proportion who achieve a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard at the end of key stage 1 in reading and mathematics has improved over time and is above the national average. Attainment in writing is more variable, particularly at the higher level. Not enough pupils make good progress from their starting points. There is a similar picture at the end of key stage 2.
- In some classes, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in their writing. Work in pupils' books shows that teachers do not always demand enough of pupils, particularly the most able. An over-reliance on worksheets in some classes limits how much and how well pupils write. In upper key stage 2, pupils write more frequently and at length. This regular practice helps them to make faster progress and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Leaders have introduced new ways of teaching spelling. This has led to improvements in Year 6 national test outcomes and in pupils' work in their books. You had identified that teachers were not routinely teaching the components of good writing. Teachers are now more focused on ensuring that pupils know how to use a wider range of accurate punctuation and vocabulary, and more complex grammatical structures. There are early signs that this is enabling more of the older pupils to achieve the higher standard.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 varies from year to year. The leader has collaborated with another school to develop an effective plan. She has led training for staff and introduced additional interventions. She monitors pupils' progress carefully and so is able to ensure that gaps in learning are addressed more quickly. As a result, pupils are making increasingly good progress from their often low starting points.
- The school has worked to improve rates of attendance for disadvantaged pupils. Recent information shows that their attendance is now above the national average.
- During the inspection, I investigated how well leaders and governors are managing the considerable staffing changes, particularly in leadership, that have taken place recently. Since taking up your interim role, you have worked tirelessly to establish the new staff team. There are new leaders for mathematics and English and a new senior leadership team. You are offering them support as they

take on their new responsibilities. At the same time, you have put into place actions to address the sharp decline in standards and progress in mathematics in the national tests for key stage 2.

- Your analysis of these test outcomes shows that many pupils lacked the fluency and understanding to approach basic calculations quickly and this limited their opportunities to tackle more complex problems. In lessons, you and I saw pupils diligently working through sets of questions. Some pupils achieved these with ease and were not suitably challenged in their thinking.
- There have been many changes to the governing body over the past year. There are several new members and a new chair. Governors are committed to ensuring that the school improves and are increasingly aware of its strengths and weaknesses. They have already begun to make changes to the way that they work with senior leaders. The local authority has brokered support from a national leader of governance as part of this process. It is too soon to see the impact of this work.
- A small minority of parents have concerns about the leadership and management of the school. Comments in Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and from parents on the playground indicate that they would like more communication from leaders, particularly about teaching arrangements and other developments.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders at all levels, including governors, rigorously check the impact of their planned actions
- pupils are taught how to use a wider range of accurate punctuation and more complex grammatical structures in their writing so that more reach the higher standard
- teachers use assessment information well to consistently set tasks for pupils which match their abilities and provide enough challenge, particularly for the most able pupils
- communication with parents is improved so that they all feel well informed and that their views are considered.

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

Joanne Sanchez-Thompson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I visited classes in all year groups, most of these with you, to observe teaching, learning and assessment. We also looked at pupils' workbooks to check the progress they are making. We discussed the school's effectiveness and the actions taken to ensure the school's improvement.

I met with leaders with responsibility for the pupil premium funding, safeguarding and English. I spoke with two members of the local governing body and a representative of the local authority. I also spoke with a group of staff. I met with groups of pupils from key stage 2 and talked informally with other pupils in lessons and during playtime. I met with parents on the playground at the beginning of the school day.

I looked at a range of documents, including your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the school's improvement plan. I also scrutinised the school's safeguarding systems, records and associated documents. I checked assessment information on how well pupils are achieving. I considered 45 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 31 written comments from parents. I took into account 15 responses to the staff questionnaire and 52 responses to the pupil questionnaire.