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Dear Mrs Hopkins

Short inspection of Waltham-on-the-Wolds Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 November 2017, 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in January 2010. The school converted to become an academy in October 2014 as part of the Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and the deputy headteacher lead the school very well. You ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the pupils' needs. Pupils enjoy school and said that their teachers make learning fun. Younger pupils enjoy the activities in the forest. Visits and science days at school promote pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding well. The learning environments in the classrooms are positive. Smart displays celebrate pupils' work. Pupils take pride in their work and present their work neatly. They are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Children in early years have a great start. The pre-school manager has ensured that the two-year-olds have a curriculum to meet their needs. The staff adapt activities to make them accessible to the younger children. The links between the pre-school and Reception Year have been strengthened greatly in the last year. Teachers have observed learning in each other's classrooms. They have checked their assessments of children's work with other teachers. As a result, the children are very well prepared to start their Reception Year.

The provision in Reception Year is very strong. The children enthusiastically learn their phonics and are eager to write words. The adults help the children to make good progress and correct their misconceptions immediately. The learning environment allows children to make good progress in all areas of learning. Children were reading the story of 'The Gingerbread Man' and were supported to write their own stories and build a house, developing their creative skills. Assessments of children's learning are regular and show that they make good progress. The children's work is shared with parents through an online portal. Parents feel well informed and are delighted with the progress that their children are making. The proportion of children who reached a good level of development in 2017 was higher than the national average. The children are well prepared for Year 1.

Parents are very complimentary about the school. All parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that their child was safe and happy. They felt that the school was well led. One parent wrote, 'The teachers are brilliant at understanding the individual needs of the children.'

Pupils' spirituality is developed very well. They have many opportunities to be reflective and creative. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have studied poems from the First World War. As part of the school's Remembrance Day service, the pupils read their own poems about war. The pupils also made their own clay poppies and decorated them using acrylic paints. In addition, the pupils' knowledge of their own and other cultures is developed well. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Attainment at the end of key stage 1 in 2016 was above the national average for the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who achieved highly in all three subjects, however, was below the national average. The school did not have any pupils in Year 2 in 2017. Pupils make broadly average progress through key stage 2. Attainment at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 was above the national average for the expected standard in reading and mathematics, but was below it in writing. The proportion of pupils who achieved highly in reading and mathematics was lower than the national average in 2017, but above the average in writing. Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress and the majority are achieving as well as other pupils nationally.

Current pupils are making good progress. Teachers are not providing enough challenge for pupils when they set tasks, however. This means that pupils are not making as much progress as they could. This applies particularly to the most able pupils in mathematics and reading. The most able pupils are not consistently challenged in mathematics to think hard and solve more complex questions. In reading, pupils now read more challenging texts. Teachers, however, do not expect pupils to answer questions about the texts in enough detail. This means that they are not helping pupils to show that they have a deep understanding of the text.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the staff team are vigilant and respond well to any concerns that may arise. Prompt action is taken and recorded in detail. You are resolute in following up

concerns to ensure that a child is safe. You have ensured that there are enough designated leaders for safeguarding in school if you or the deputy headteacher are absent. Staff training is up to date.

The pupils are taught well about how to keep themselves safe. Older pupils have taken part in a workshop from the NSPCC and are aware of the different types of abuse. They know what to do if they are worried about something. They have recently raised funds to support children who are at risk of neglect. Pupils throughout the school are taught about how to stay safe online. They know not to share passwords or reveal personal information online.

Pupils said that bullying rarely happens at the school. Pupils believe that while everyone is different, they should be treated equally. They behave well and their attendance is above the national average.

Inspection findings

- You and the deputy headteacher have led improvements at the school. You both have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The curriculum is well planned. It provides pupils with plentiful opportunities to learn about different subjects in an exciting way. You have arranged for the staff to work with teachers from other schools locally and from within the Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust. Staff have valuable opportunities to observe other teachers' practice and to check on the accuracy of the school's assessments. In addition, the targets you set teachers for their performance management are closely aligned to the school's development priorities. This has helped teachers improve their practice. The quality of teaching is good and pupils make good progress. Staff morale is high.
- The governing body fulfils its role very well. Governors regularly visit the school and have a good understanding of the school's effectiveness. They have worked with governors from Redmile Church of England Primary School to develop a development plan that focuses on the right priorities for this school. Governors have checked that the pre-school and the Reception class teachers work well together to ensure a smooth transition in early years. This has been achieved well and shows the governing body's capacity to hold leaders to account for school improvement.
- The leader for mathematics has worked well with the mathematics leader from Redmile Church of England Primary School to train staff on teaching mathematical reasoning. The positive impact of this training is reflected in pupils' work. Pupils have plentiful opportunities to develop their reasoning. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were given a sequence of numbers and asked to explain which number was incorrect, and why. When pupils do find the work hard, teachers skilfully remind the pupils of the strategies they can use to solve the problem, and support them appropriately.
- The most able pupils, however, are not being challenged well enough in mathematics. Teachers do not consistently move them on to more challenging work quickly enough to make them think more deeply. Consequently, not enough

of the most able pupils make the progress they should or achieve highly at the end of key stages 1 and 2.

- You have promoted reading through introducing high-quality texts for each class to read and analyse. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are reading 'War Horse' by Michael Morpurgo and are learning new vocabulary, for example, the words 'solemn' and 'buoyant'. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have been reading a traditional tale based on the story of three little pigs. Teachers asked pupils to explain why the wolf would want to eat the pigs. Throughout the school, however, teachers do not ask pupils to explain their understanding of the texts in sufficient detail. Pupils' written answers do not show that pupils have a deep understanding of the texts they are reading. Consequently, too few pupils achieve highly in reading.
- Teachers develop pupils' writing skills well. Younger pupils write enthusiastically and use their knowledge of phonics well to spell new words. Pupils throughout the school use ambitious vocabulary in their writing to make their sentences more exciting. Pupils write in a range of genres. They punctuate their sentences well and are increasingly writing more complex sentences. The proportion of pupils who achieved highly in writing at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 increased to be above the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers consistently challenge the most able pupils in mathematics and increase the proportion of pupils who achieve highly at the end of key stages 1 and 2
- teachers provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate a deep understanding of the texts that they are reading and increase the proportion of pupils who achieve highly.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust, 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

Martin Finch
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and all the school's teachers. I spoke with parents and observed pupils at breaktime. I visited all the classrooms with you, and looked at pupils' work with the deputy headteacher. I met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body, and two members of the Diocese of

Leicester Academies Trust. I met with a group of pupils and heard pupils read. You and I reviewed records about keeping children safe. I studied your school development plan, your self-evaluation and minutes of meetings of the governing body. I looked at your documents relating to performance management. I considered the 32 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, the 29 responses to the Ofsted free-text service and the seven responses to Ofsted's staff survey.