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Mrs Julie Alexander
Headteacher
St Peter's CofE Primary School
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Dear Mrs Alexander

Short inspection of St Peter's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 18 December 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in October 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 the last inspection, the school has converted to an academy. In 2016, St Peter's joined with two neighbouring schools to establish the Mid-Trent Multi Academy Trust (MAT).

You and school leaders work together well so that pupils achieve high standards. Attainment is above the national average in the early years, in the phonics screening check, at the end of key stage 1 and at the end of key stage 2. Numbers in each year group are sometimes small and can vary each year. However, you manage this well and organise classes and groups to meet the needs of pupils effectively.

Pupils behave well. They have positive attitudes to their learning and play well together at breaktimes. Where pupils might need additional support with managing their behaviour, relationships or feelings, they attend a nurture group. Here, adults help pupils to interact positively and enjoy social times, such as eating lunch, talking or playing games together.

You have addressed the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report of the predecessor school. You considered the progress of middle-ability pupils in mathematics, especially girls. As a result of your actions, pupils' attitudes to

mathematics are very positive now. Pupils are confident to answer questions because they are encouraged to 'have a go', especially the girls. Your analysis of pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics shows that, in almost all year groups, there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls, and in some year groups, girls outperform boys. Observation of mathematics during the inspection confirmed that pupils work confidently in mathematics, especially the most able. Teachers ensure that pupils receive regular feedback during lessons and misconceptions are addressed promptly.

Together with senior leaders, you analyse assessment information carefully and check the progress and attainment of groups and individual pupils closely. You carry out regular progress meetings and identify quickly any pupils who may be falling behind. Where you identify any issues, you take appropriate action. For example, although progress in reading is consistently average over time, you have noticed a downward trend. As a result, you have decided to review your approach to the teaching of reading.

Parents are very positive about the school. Many said their children 'love school'. The school currently has the highest attendance rate in the county. Parents appreciate the good communication and the good progress their children make.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils are safe and well looked after. Staff receive regular training and know what actions to take if they have a concern about a pupil or a member of staff. Staff know that they can contact children's services themselves if they need to. There is a clear system in place for recording concerns and records are kept secure. However, although you file concerns in chronological order, the records do not enable others to see an overview of these concerns quickly.

Inspection findings

- Over time, pupils achieve strong outcomes in reading, writing and phonics at the end of key stage 1. This is because the teaching of reading has a high priority and pupils are taught effectively. Leaders ensure that pupils develop secure skills in phonics throughout Reception and key stage 1. They provide additional support for pupils who are at risk of falling behind. In lessons, pupils are fully engaged because routines are well established. Teachers ensure that pupils develop good reading skills. Pupils pronounce sounds accurately. They sort out real and nonsense words by putting them in sentences to check that they make sense. Teachers and older pupils read regularly with pupils. Pupils read regularly at home. In writing, pupils apply their phonics skills from an early age and write sentences accurately.
- Leaders have developed a curriculum that interests pupils and engages them well in their learning. Pupils are developing secure learning skills in subjects such as history. For example, pupils in key stage 2 talked enthusiastically about the Vikings and shared a breadth of knowledge. Pupils described how the Vikings

might use particular materials to build their homes and how the weather affected the clothes they wore. They discussed how Viking long ships were designed to navigate the fjords and made their own model ships. The curriculum is enhanced by visits out of school and visitors to school. For example, in their Romans topic, pupils enjoyed a Roman day when they fought as gladiators. Pupils have opportunities to apply their English skills in other subjects. However, there are fewer opportunities for extended writing in topic work. The quality of handwriting and presentation is not consistently strong across all year groups and classes.

- Curriculum themes include a focus on rights and responsibilities, spiritual and moral development and diversity. Pupils learn about the impact of pollution, for instance. They learn how to stay safe in water and how water is used in different religious ceremonies and rituals in different cultures and faiths. Pupils have access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as dodgeball, table tennis and tennis. They take part in a range of competitions and tournaments for netball, cross country and sports-hall athletics. They have opportunities to play instruments such as a keyboard, a violin or a flute. Pupils perform to elderly residents in a local care home and in collaboration with the local secondary school, and enjoy performing concerts to parents.
- Since becoming an academy, the trust has delegated responsibilities, such as monitoring the work of the school, to the local governing body of St Peter's. Members of the local governing body are committed to the school and visit regularly. They meet with leaders to discuss their work, such as leadership of special educational needs provision and information technology. They receive regular reports from leaders and ask appropriately challenging questions. They monitor the impact of additional funds, such as the physical education and sport premium funding and the pupil premium, to ensure that these are spent effectively. However, their approach to monitoring the work of the school is not strategic enough. They do not have a clear understanding of the priorities that the school is working on, for example the school's new approach to reading. This is because the school's plans for improvement do not make the most important priorities explicit enough.
- Governors report to the trust's directors through the minutes of their meetings and the headteacher's reports. However, the trust does not hold leaders or the local governing body sufficiently to account. The chief executive officer (CEO) has not visited the school and trust members have not been rigorous enough in checking statutory requirements, such as safeguarding. The lines of accountability between the school and the trust are vague because some local governors sit on several boards and hold themselves to account. In the recent past, the headteacher sat on both the MAT board and the local governing body. However, the headteacher resigned from the MAT board at the end of the last academic year. The trust has plans in place to recruit independent members because they recognise that accountability is an issue to be addressed. Leaders across the trust share some good practice and this is beginning to become more formalised. The trust has plans in place to develop this further.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors adopt a more strategic approach to monitoring and evaluation
- the school's plans for improvement are more sharply focused so that key priorities can be monitored and evaluated more effectively
- the trust develops clear lines of accountability to hold leaders, including the local governing body, to account
- safeguarding records provide a clearer overview of concerns
- teachers further develop writing opportunities across the curriculum and ensure that the quality of handwriting and presentation is of a consistently high standard in all subjects.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Lichfield, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sue Cameron
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and your senior leadership team. I met with the chair and members of the local governing body and the chief finance officer for the trust. I spoke to the CEO of the trust on the telephone. I spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day and considered 22 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 16 written responses. I also considered 18 responses to the staff survey and 32 responses to the pupil survey. I spoke to pupils formally about the curriculum, and informally during the day. I reviewed, with pupils, the work in their books. I scrutinised a range of school documents, including the single central record, safeguarding records, the school's self-evaluation document and school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, curriculum plans and assessment information. I visited all classes with you and school leaders and looked at pupils' work. I observed pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including in breakfast club and at lunchtime.