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Mrs Kay Swann
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Swann

Short inspection of Cawston Church of England Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 20 June 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in May 2016.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

The school has many strengths, most notably the broad and engaging curriculum which pupils say they appreciate and enjoy. You have developed the curriculum over several years, achieving a range of awards and quality marks in the process. These include a silver science primary quality mark, a gold sports games award and the learning outdoors gold award, among others. These awards are testimony to the high quality and wide-ranging opportunities you provide for pupils in several subjects and areas. For example, all pupils have participated in competitive sport, representing the school. They are very proud of this.

Most parents are appreciative of the school's work and the education their children receive. Many are effusive in their praise. Staff are proud to work at Cawston Church of England Primary and feel well supported and respected.

In September 2016, the school joined the Diocese of Norwich Education Academies Trust (DNEAT). Governors provide appropriate levels of support and challenge. They know the school and its context well. They are appreciative of the training provided for them by the trust, as are the staff. You and your staff, leaders, governors and the trust work effectively as a team, supporting each other well. Pupils are considerate, sensitive and supportive of one another and enjoy positive relationships with teachers and support staff. They are polite and caring to their

peers and to adults and demonstrate positive behaviours for learning. Cawston Primary Academy is a happy place where pupils are keen to learn and achieve.

Leaders' chosen approach of focusing on 'values education' is at the heart of all that you do. This provides links to learning as pupils explore resilience, courage and other helpful values. For example, during a whole-school assembly, you made links between St George and courage, explaining that being brave is not always easy. This taught pupils about making difficult decisions and persevering.

Areas for improvement identified in the school's previous inspection report, including challenge for pupils of all abilities and better-focused school improvement documentation, have been addressed by leaders. Work in these areas is beginning to show impact.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

The school has robust policies and procedures, many based on trust policies, which provide a solid foundation on which to base a culture of safeguarding. Regular training takes place for all staff and governors and has included the 'Prevent' duty on radicalisation, 'Keeping children safe in education' (KCSIE 2018) and female genital mutilation.

Governors and leaders are aware of local risks such as 'county lines' relating to drug gangs, and are planning further training in this regard. Pupils are educated about risks such as those online and learn about anti-bullying and e-safety. They say they feel safe and know what to do if they have any worries.

All staff are familiar with the school's procedures for reporting any concerns. Daily 'talk' sessions in class provide a forum for raising any worries or questions pupils may have. Well-being is given a high priority at the school and staff support pupils and their families well.

Leaders' checks made on staff to ensure that they are all suitable to work with pupils are detailed and mostly meet requirements. Some historic administrative omissions which came to light during the inspection were immediately addressed.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection I wanted to focus on what leaders are doing to improve progress and thereby increase pupils' attainment. This is because progress at key stage 2 has been average for the past three years and attainment at the higher standards has generally been below that seen nationally.
- Current in-house pupil performance information indicates stronger progress and attainment at the higher standards. This is borne out by work in pupils' books which demonstrates positive progress over time in all subjects, including the

wider curriculum. In observations of teaching during the inspection, pupils engaged well with learning and subsequently made progress. While most pupils are visibly making progress, more are now making stronger progress.

- Pupils' attendance has been below national averages for three years. I wanted to check what strategies leaders are using to improve this. Attendance is now in line with national averages. Leaders are using a range of strategies to encourage good attendance, including rewards such as class shields alongside effective systems such as writing letters to parents. Pupils who miss school frequently are sensitively targeted and supported to improve.
- The previous inspection raised the issue of challenge for the most able pupils. Attainment at the higher standards and greater depth has generally been below average in end-of-key-stage tests for the past three years. Leaders have introduced several strategies to improve this, including targeted curriculum planning for pupils of different abilities and starting points.
- In most classes, work is now available which provides extension and challenge for the most able pupils. Some teachers encourage pupils to self-select their own level of challenge, which pupils do skilfully and with careful consideration. However, in some classes, pupils are required to complete the easier standard tasks first before starting work that will provide sufficient challenge and stretch. This slows learning and consequently limits the progress pupils can make.
- Some pupils with lower academic starting points, while well supported by teaching assistants, do not have the basic skills to access standard tasks set for the class without heavily supported direction from adults.
- I looked at the progress and attainment of children in the early years. These children are taught in a mixed-age class with Year 1 pupils. Early years children are provided with a range of age-appropriate activities which meet their developmental needs. Some of these activities are well within their capabilities and do not challenge and extend children to excel and exceed early learning goals by the end of Reception. Children observed during the inspection demonstrate they are capable of more.
- Since the previous inspection leaders, governors and the trust have, as recommended, improved the school's self-evaluation and improvement documentation. It is now clear, focused and appropriate with measurable steps identified. These steps are monitored carefully and regularly by school leaders, governors and the trust.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- work started on improving provision for the most able pupils is extended and streamlined to ensure that most-able pupils achieve well
- planned activities for Reception children include potential for extra stretch and challenge for those who demonstrate that they are ready for it

- pupils with lower starting points are given more opportunities to independently practise their basic skills.

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

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Bell-Cook
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I spent time in every classroom, jointly observing learning with you. We also talked with pupils, looked at a range of pupils' books and held discussions with several members of staff. A separate book scrutiny took place, accompanied by you and the assistant headteacher. I observed pupils at play and at lunch. A range of the school's documentation and website, including that relating to safeguarding, was scrutinised. I held a meeting with governors. The chief executive officer of the trust and other trust senior representatives met with me to discuss the effectiveness of their role. The 63 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View were analysed, as were 28 free-text responses from parents. Responses from 16 staff members who completed Ofsted online survey were considered. No pupils completed Ofsted's online pupil survey.