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Mr Lee Kilkenny
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Dear Lee Kilkenny

Short inspection of Newton Regis CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 3 July 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.

You were appointed as headteacher in September 2016 and your deputy headteacher at the same time. Together, you have rapidly set a clear and ambitious direction for the school. You have strengthened the quality of teaching through diligent support and training for staff.

You have created a school pupils and staff are proud to be a part of. You have high expectations of staff and pupils. You develop and celebrate the talents of individuals and teams in school. Good practice is shared with others in the multi-academy trust. The ethos you have created is calm, positive and purposeful. The motto of 'Living life in all its fullness' is visible in the breadth of experiences for pupils. All of the staff who responded to the staff questionnaire unanimously agreed that they are proud to work the school. Staff all agreed that under your leadership they are working in a climate where staff are respected and innovation is valued.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Parents appreciate how successfully pupils are nurtured and developed. Typical comments include, 'Children love learning' and 'Staff are kind and welcoming. They are encouraging and approachable.' Parents commented positively about the inclusive sense of belonging to the family of the school.

Pupils are charming and well mannered. They enjoy coming to school. Attitudes to learning are very positive. Standards at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 were above the national average in reading and mathematics. You are working effectively to improve results at the end of key stage 1. Work in books shows that attainment is rising in key stage 1 in most areas of learning, although spelling, punctuation and grammar is an area for continued improvement. Pupils are not consistently applying their knowledge of sounds and spelling rules in their writing in English or other subjects.

You have addressed the key issues from the previous inspection. Your most-able pupils are achieving well by the end of key stage 2. The proportion of pupils working at greater depth in reading, mathematics and spelling, punctuation and grammar was well above the national average at the end of key stage 2 in 2018. Work in books shows a high level of challenge for pupils of all ability groups, including the most able.

Your monitoring of teaching is thorough. You provide staff with concise feedback on what areas of practice are working well and where teaching needs to improve. You are proactive in taking action to improve teaching when required and provide support for staff. Both staff and pupils are overwhelmingly positive on how successfully your school takes account of their well-being and their emotional and mental health.

You are developing the skills of subject leaders and middle leaders. This is at an early stage of development. Subject leaders are working across two schools in the multi-academy trust. You and your deputy actively lead improvements within the school. You recognise that developing the skills and abilities of middle leaders will assist you in building leadership capacity within the multi-academy trust.

Safeguarding is effective.

You place safeguarding at the centre of school life. As a result, there is a very strong whole-school culture of keeping children safe. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a child. Referrals are acted upon promptly by leaders. Staff training is updated regularly across the school year. When you employ new staff, safer recruitment checks are completed. On arrival at the school, you provide all visitors with detailed safeguarding information. Thorough checks are made on visitors and volunteers in school.

Pupils feel safe in school. The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to learn about different aspects of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe on the internet. Through assemblies and event days, pupils learn about safety in school and safety in the community. Parents who responded to Parent View all said that their child feels safe in school.

Inspection findings

- You have prioritised the development of early reading as a key area for school

improvement. You are currently leading key stage 1 yourself. You are using your own skills and expertise in early reading to support middle leaders. At the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading has been below the national average for the past three years. The teaching of phonics has significantly improved over the past three years. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 is now in line with the national average. Staff training, improved resources and reading areas have had a positive impact on the teaching of phonics. Pupils are using their phonics knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words, when reading. You have identified that books pupils are reading in key stage 1 are not always well matched to the phonics knowledge the pupils have. For some pupils, the books are too easy and for others they are too difficult. This is because staff are not always accurately assessing the next steps in reading for pupils. This is slowing the progress of some pupils in reading in key stage 1, in particular those who are struggling to read.

- Outcomes in early years are improving. Children get off to a rapid start in Nursery and Reception. You have addressed the areas for improvement in the previous inspection report. Children now have many opportunities to use their early skills of writing and mathematics in different areas of learning in indoors and outdoor play. Adults are skilled in developing children's play through effective interventions and questions. Children are confident learners. Positive relationships are evident in the early years. Children are keen to share their learning. For example, during the inspection, Reception children showed high levels of enjoyment when junk modelling with 3D shapes. They were proud of their fairy houses, talking confidently about the different rooms and spaces the fairies would use. Children are flourishing through the range of creative learning opportunities staff provide. Parents value the communication on their children's progress through the online systems the school has in place.
- You have worked successfully to improve attendance. A small number of pupils have low attendance. This number has significantly reduced in this academic year. Effective systems are in place to support pupils and their families, to improve attendance. You have good links with Warwickshire local authority to improve the attendance of traveller children. You promote positive rewards for good attendance in weekly assemblies and end of term events. The school is working tirelessly to improve attendance. Overall attendance is just below the national average.
- The curriculum is vibrant. It is enriched with a wide range of first-hand, learning experiences through visits and visitors. For example, when studying the book, 'Owl Babies', a visit from a local falconry expert allowed pupils to experience for themselves young owls in their school. The older pupils found their visits to the National Memorial Arboretum and The Staffordshire Regiment Museum enhanced their learning about World War II. Pupils spoke about being an evacuee for the day, arriving at school dressed and with their cases packed. The curriculum is designed to develop creativity and thinking. Whole-school events bring the community of the school together. Pupils are particularly proud of the funds they raise to help others through 'Ice cream Fridays' and national charity events. Pupils enjoy sharing their sporting skills with other schools through inter-school sporting competitions and events. Pupils benefit from the high-quality sports

facilities on site. Pupils are keen to improve on their personal best on the 'Golden Mile', running around the track at the start of physical education lessons. Pupils value the different clubs they have access to in school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers and support staff consistently apply their skills and knowledge of early reading so that pupils make good progress in reading
- pupils' progress in spelling, grammar and punctuation accelerates in key stage 1
- the skills and potential of middle leaders develops in order to have greater impact on the school improvement priorities.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the director of education for the Diocese of Birmingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Warwickshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Pamela Matty
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, leaders of English and early years members of the local governing body and Heartwood multi-academy trust board. I visited classrooms with you and the deputy headteacher, scrutinised pupils' books and spoke to pupils about their learning. I talked to pupils to gather their views about the school, during the school day and at breaktime and lunchtime. I reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. I sought the views of parents at the start of the school day. I took account of the 15 responses to Parent View; the 12 free-text responses from parents; the 13 responses to Ofsted's staff survey; and the 20 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.