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Mrs Amy Graham
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Graham

Short inspection of Christ Church CofE First School

Following my visit to the school on 27 February 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 February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school joined the Key Educational Trust (KET) in April 2016 as an academy and you were appointed as executive headteacher in September 2018. You have acted swiftly to bring about stability, following several changes in leadership over the last two years. There is a clear sense of unity among all members of staff. They share your commitment to ensuring that all pupils receive a high-quality education that prepares them well for the next stage in their education. All staff members who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire strongly agree that they are proud to work at the school where they are respected and valued by leaders. Relationships between staff and pupils and pupils with one another are excellent. Your pupils are polite, well mannered and welcoming to visitors.

Pupils enjoy coming to school, where they learn and achieve well in a broad range of subjects. They have positive attitudes to learning and try to do their best during lessons. The proportion of pupils who attained the expected and greater depth standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 was above the national averages in 2017 and 2018. Pupils' books show that most make good progress in a variety of subjects, including English, mathematics and science. You have high expectations of all staff and pupils. Your action plans reflect this because they focus on bringing about further improvements to the quality of teaching and to pupils' achievement.

At the last inspection leaders were asked to further improve the quality of teaching,

with a focus on ensuring that pupils apply their skills and knowledge to solve problems, particularly in mathematics. You have introduced a new approach to teaching mathematics and have provided training for all staff. Pupils experience a broad curriculum in this subject and problem-solving is a feature of every topic. You ensure that you and other subject leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching. Teachers appreciate the feedback they receive about what they do well and what could be further improved. Your records show that the quality of teaching is strong throughout the school.

In addition, you have successfully addressed the second area for improvement. Your whole-school development plan ensures that pupils' progress and attainment, particularly in mathematics and writing, are high priorities. Your plan contains clear and appropriate actions and the impact of your work is reviewed in termly meetings where pupils' progress is discussed.

Almost all of the parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and those who I met during the inspection are very positive about the work of the school. They agree that their children are happy and well cared for, and that they make good progress. Several parents of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) told me that they are particularly pleased with the support their children receive.

The local governing board is committed to bringing about further improvement at the school. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They provide appropriate levels of support and challenge for all leaders and they are mindful of the well-being of all staff.

The trust (KET) provides effective support for the school and this is helping you to bring about further improvements to the quality of education. This includes whole-staff training, peer support for leaders at all levels and opportunities for staff to work together to moderate pupils' work.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All staff have child-protection training and you share updates regularly. As a result, all staff know what to do if they are worried about a pupil's welfare. Child-protection records contain appropriate information and show that leaders work well with other agencies when they have any concerns about pupils' safety. Records show that leaders understand the additional needs of the most vulnerable pupils well and, when appropriate, they provide extra support for families. In addition, the procedures for vetting the suitability of staff and visitors to work with pupils are rigorous.

Pupils told me that they feel safe and well cared for at school. They told me that they learn how to stay safe through activities at school. For example, they know how to stay safe when using the internet, when they are crossing the road and when they are out riding their bikes. In addition, pupils told me that they learn

about fire safety. Pupils are confident that any adult at school would help them if they were upset or worried about anything.

Inspection findings

- I wanted to find out about children's progress in Reception. In 2017 and 2018 the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development at the end of Reception was above the national figure. Leaders ensure that transition arrangements are thorough so that the needs and skills of all children are understood before they start school. This means that, right from the beginning, teachers plan activities that are linked to children's interests and that build upon what children already know and can do. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to plan and review children's learning and, as a result, they all know each child's next steps.
- Children's books, photographs and assessment notes demonstrate that children experience a rich, exciting curriculum. Each area of learning is well resourced, and this allows children to choose how they interpret and develop a task. During the inspection, we saw children who were highly engaged in a range of activities and who responded very well to adults' questions and praise.
- I also wanted to find out about the quality of teaching and how well teachers build upon pupils' achievement at the end of the early years and key stage 1. You ensure that teachers have a secure subject knowledge and that they know what must be taught in each year group and what pupils should achieve by the end of the year.
- Teachers explain mathematical tasks clearly, using equipment and diagrams to ensure that pupils understand what they must do. In addition, pupils use practical equipment well to bring meaning to their calculations. Pupils' books show that they practise and refine calculation skills and that there are opportunities to apply their skills and knowledge when solving problems. Teachers model the use of mathematical vocabulary and expect pupils to use this vocabulary in their explanations. Teachers use assessment information to plan lessons that build on what pupils already know and can do. However, sometimes, the most able pupils complete work that they find easy before they move onto the more difficult tasks that teachers have planned for them.
- Pupils throughout the school make good progress in writing. Their books show that they have regular opportunities to write, linked to topic work or to books they have read. Teachers ensure that pupils build a secure knowledge of grammar and punctuation appropriate to their year group and that they apply this in their independent writing tasks. Pupils' books show that by the time they reach Year 4 they understand the features of different types of writing. In addition, many pupils are beginning to produce more sophisticated writing, using appropriate vocabulary and showing an awareness of the audience they are writing for.
- You ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced and that there is a focus on pupils' acquisition of subject-specific knowledge and skills. For example, in science and religious education teachers successfully plan learning that ensures

pupils' knowledge and skills are built upon progressively from one year to the next. Pupils told me that they find their lessons interesting and that teachers make learning fun. They also told me that they like the way topics are organised with links to art and opportunities to read whole-class texts that help them to understand what they are learning about. Popular topics include 'How to train your dragon' and 'Fantastic beasts'. Pupils also explained that teachers encourage them to carry out their own research as part of their learning so that they can find out as much as possible about an aspect of a topic. Leaders are currently revising the curriculum and the content of each topic. This is to ensure that pupils will build on what they already know and can do in all subjects as they move through each year group.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils are moved on to more challenging tasks in mathematics as soon as they are ready
- they continue with their work to develop the curriculum so that teachers can plan tasks that build pupils' knowledge and skills from one year to the next.

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

Jo Evans
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, all staff, parents and members of the local governing board. I also met with the chief executive officer of KET. We visited classrooms and looked at pupils' work together. I also met with a group of pupils. I reviewed the school's website and documents, including the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks, and child-protection systems. I also reviewed the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans and monitoring information. I took account of the 17 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 10 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.