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Mrs Christine Le-Voguer
Principal
Ravenfield Primary Academy
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Dear Mrs Le-Voguer

Short inspection of Ravenfield Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 9 January 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 November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There have been many changes in the school's leadership in the last few years. You began your post as principal in September 2016, just over a year after the school became an academy as part of the Maltby Learning Trust. You have high expectations for pupils and have challenged any underperformance in the quality of teaching. This has resulted in some staffing changes. However, staffing is now becoming more settled and the quality of teaching has improved. This is enabling more rapid improvements in pupils' learning. Additionally, you have accurately determined the right priorities for improvement and leaders' actions are resulting in marked success.

Outcomes for pupils are generally strong. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the early years has been consistently above the national average. By the end of key stage 1, reading, writing and mathematics standards continued to improve in 2017. The proportion of pupils meeting and exceeding the standard was above the national average in all three subjects. However, the proportion of pupils meeting the standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been steadily declining and was just below the national average in 2017. At the end of key stage 2, reading and mathematics standards have been consistently in line with or above the national averages for the last two years. However, in writing, pupils' progress has not been as positive and attainment has been below the national average. You have taken action to remedy the situation with the support of the multi-academy trust. There are encouraging signs of

improvement but you are acutely aware that some of the new approaches need to become more embedded to enable faster improvement.

You have been well supported by the multi-academy trust as you establish your staffing team. Leadership support from trust leaders with specific expertise has been available to support you in addressing some of the school's improvement priorities. This has added additional capacity to increase the pace of change. Additionally, it has helped to create a positive culture among your staff. They feel supported and valued and particularly recognise the impact of the training they have received and can articulate how it has improved their teaching and pupils' learning. However, as many middle leadership posts within school are new, you acknowledge the need to develop these leaders so there is less reliance on trust support in the future.

There are a few parents and carers who have been resistant to the necessary changes you have made since taking up appointment. However, you have been keen to engage with parents and have introduced a range of workshops and events to help parents be more involved in their child's learning. This has been welcomed by parents. For example, as some parents explained to me, it helps them to understand how phonics is taught so they can use the same approach at home.

You have created a purposeful learning environment for pupils. As a result, they behave very well and have positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils talk about the 5 R's and can articulate how learning about them has helped them to become more effective learners. For example, they use their resilience to approach tricky problems. Pupils' positive learning attitudes are also evident in the classroom. They work with each other in a respectful manner, taking turns to talk and listening to each other's ideas.

Safeguarding is effective.

A culture of safeguarding is clearly present across the school. This is because leaders, governors and the multi-academy trust take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. You make sure that staff receive regular training updates so that they are effective in recognising and responding to signs of concern.

Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and that staff look after them well. They do not feel that bullying is an issue. They are confident that staff deal with any rare issues of poor behaviour firmly and fairly. The curriculum effectively develops pupils' understanding of potential dangers, such as crossing roads, bullying and using the internet. As a result, they know how to keep themselves and others safe.

Inspection findings

- You were aware that boys did not perform as well as they should have done by the end of Reception in 2016. In comparison, girls' performance was well above

the national average. However, as a result of leaders' actions to ensure that the provision was enabling boys to develop their early reading, writing and mathematics skills, 79% of boys reached all of the literacy and mathematics early learning goals in 2017. This proportion is above the national average for boys in 2016. You have made sure that there is a range of high-quality resources and activities which support children in using and applying the skills they have been taught. The new staff team is being well supported by a trust consultant to continue to build on the successes already achieved.

- You were disappointed by the declining trend in the outcomes of the Year 1 phonics screening check. Prompt action taken to introduce a new approach to teaching phonics is resulting in much more consistency in the way pupils are taught. Staff have been well trained and are therefore becoming more confident in teaching phonics. This has supported pupils to grasp their phonics skills quicker. The clear and consistent strategies are also supporting pupils' learning attitudes and behaviour, which in turn are helping to improve the speed of pupils' learning throughout the curriculum. At this point in the year, pupils are further along in the phonics programme than ever before and are making strong progress. This is because you have set high expectations and have made sure that staff understand the need for all pupils to be able to read as quickly as possible. Individuals who are not on track are spotted straight away and additional support is tailored to their needs. Pupils enjoy reading and read regularly at home to parents. They often re-read books in the early stages of reading so they develop greater fluency and confidence. However, you acknowledge that in order to support their reading success even further, the books need to be matched precisely to the phonics skills which pupils have just been taught. You are also aware that as staff are becoming familiar with a range of new teaching strategies, it is vital that leaders check that they are being used as consistently as possible for maximum effect.
- Leaders have made sure there are regular checks on pupils' writing attainment and progress throughout key stage 2. This has helped leaders to quickly identify any pupil who has not made enough progress. Leaders and teachers then analyse the pupil's work to spot any gaps in learning so that precise next steps can be identified. Assessment information and work in books now show that, on the whole, pupils in key stage 2 are making better progress with writing than before. Leaders are aware that this is not yet rapid enough in every year group and that some of the new approaches are not being used consistently enough to maximise the progress made. The English leader is new to her role and is receiving effective development to support her in further improving the quality of teaching and learning in writing throughout the school.
- Pupils' attendance has been consistently above average overall and is improving even further over time. Attendance has also improved for disadvantaged pupils, whose attendance in 2015/16 was in the bottom 10% nationally at 92.7%. In 2016/17, attendance for disadvantaged pupils was 95.7%. Likewise, persistent absence continues to be much lower than national figures and has improved again last year. Leaders' actions to introduce new systems and procedures have also dramatically reduced the number of pupils arriving late to school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new teaching approaches are quickly embedded so that they continue to improve the rate of pupils' progress
- middle leaders continue to develop their skills so they can have an increasing impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.

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

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Godfrey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, a range of leaders from the Maltby Learning Trust and the English subject leader. I also met with five members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. I evaluated documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance records, and information about safeguarding. We visited classrooms together to observe teaching and learning. Together with you, the English subject leader and a trust senior leader, we scrutinised the work of a small group of pupils. I listened to three pupils read. I spoke with several parents at the start of the school day and considered the 58 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I met with a group of pupils from a range of year groups and spoke with a group of teachers.