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Julie Hopkins
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Dear Mrs Hopkins

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Redmile Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 16 November 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help that you gave me and for the time that you made available to discuss the actions which you are taking to improve the outcomes for pupils at the school.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about a possible decline in standards at the academy.

Evidence

I held discussions with you and other senior leaders at the school and looked at information that you hold about the progress of the pupils. I met with the early years leader and the subject leader for religious education and English. I visited all classrooms during lessons to observe the pupils working and to look at examples of their work. I looked separately at a sample of the pupils' work. I met with a group of pupils to discuss their experience of the school. I met with members of the governing body to discuss the work of the school. I held a telephone conversation with representatives of the Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust, of which the school is a part. I scrutinised the school's development plan. I looked at a variety of documents, including the school's self-evaluation report and safeguarding records.

Context

The school is much smaller than the average primary school, but the number on roll has increased by about a third over the last few years. The proportion of pupils who

have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is above average. It is as much as one quarter in some year groups. The proportions of boys and girls vary greatly between year groups. The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school part-way through their education is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is below average. A substantial majority of the pupils is from white British backgrounds. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The executive headteacher and the executive deputy headteacher are in charge of another school, as well as Redmile. The school converted to become an academy in December 2014. About half of the teaching staff are new to the school, since it became an academy. This is the first inspection of the school since its predecessor school was judged to be outstanding in October 2013.

Main findings

You, the governing body, the senior leaders and other leaders at the school are highly effective in identifying things that need to be improved and then in dealing with them. You have responded promptly and vigorously to the dip in the progress of the pupils who completed key stage 2 suggested by the provisional national test and assessment results for 2017. Your explanation of what happened for each pupil is detailed, well-grounded in evidence, and convincing.

You have, for example, identified that part of the difficulty with the 2017 results was due to the teachers still learning about the new national approach to assessment. In particular, the teachers are still getting to grips with what is needed to help the pupils to achieve greater depth in their learning and mastery in mathematics. Accordingly, you have swiftly introduced new, systematic approaches to teaching reading, writing and mathematics. You have introduced new topics that provide better opportunities for the pupils to learn and to practise their skills. Currently, the pupils are making solid and secure gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding in a range of subjects.

The pupils learn very well at the school and become confident, self-aware, reflective and articulate young people. They enjoy their education very much. The school helps them to develop very positive attitudes to learning and to life in general. These attributes equip the pupils very well for the next stage of their education. They reflect the school's singular success in promoting the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and excellent behaviour.

The pupils converse, with very obvious enjoyment, on a range of topics. Encouraged by the teaching at the school, they are brimming with curiosity and eager to discuss things. I asked the group with whom I met if they had lessons about right and wrong. 'Oh, they're really exciting!' said one, after which the pupils took over and conducted a discussion amongst themselves, sharing well-reasoned views on different matters and listening respectfully to each other. The pupils value very strongly the friendliness of the school community. That helps new arrivals to the school, in particular, to settle in and to thrive very quickly.

The staff develop very strong relationships with the pupils. That results in the pupils having high levels of trust in the staff. The pupils say that the teachers know them personally and their learning needs very well. They are very confident that, routinely, they get the support that they need and that it helps them to make strong progress.

The teachers plan lessons carefully. They check regularly and frequently on how well the pupils are doing. They identify mistakes and misconceptions and direct the pupils effectively to correct them; this supports the secure gains in the pupils' knowledge and skills.

The teachers use what they know about the pupils to set challenging work for them. They use simple, school-wide techniques, such as the 'hot chilli challenges', to spark the pupils' interest and keep the pupils' aspirations high. As a result, the pupils want to do more and do better. The teachers have been hampered in doing so by difficulties in gaining a clear understanding of what is required for the pupils to achieve greater depth in their learning and mastery in mathematics. You have made dealing with this a priority in the school development plan.

In the early years, gaps in the children's knowledge, skills and understanding are identified quickly. The staff have identified that it is the children's social and behavioural development that most restricts the children who do not do so from reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. This has led recently to a greater emphasis on those areas of learning.

Any emerging SEN are picked up on quickly, starting in the early years. The pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are helped to take part fully in lessons, so that they make secure progress.

In lessons, the pupils respond rapidly to instructions. Typically, they concentrate on their work well and apply themselves to it earnestly. They are very well motivated and want to do well. The most highly motivated are quite prepared to request more-challenging work when they have found something easy, including by writing comments to the teacher in their exercise books.

The school pays careful attention to safeguarding the pupils. The staff are alert to potential issues. They know what to do if they have a concern. The responsible leaders 'go the extra mile' to check that potentially vulnerable pupils are safe and to assist families who may need help. The pupils learn a variety of ways to keep themselves safe. The impact of different things that the school does, such as a visit to the 'warning zone', was very apparent when I discussed it with them.

The trust provides a range of support for the school. It keeps the progress of the school under regular and frequent review. It checks directly on how well things are going at the school. It ensures that the governing body and senior leaders are fully informed about the outcomes from the checks. This helps to ensure that the

governing body and the senior leaders are exceptionally well informed and so able to form an accurate and precise view of the quality of the school's work.

The school benefited substantially from the trust's swift response to recent staffing difficulties. The response ensured that the school was able to function fully, despite the difficulties.

External support

The school is very outward-looking. You capitalise on the support that is available from the trust. The staff take part in a range of networks and professional development opportunities offered by the trust. Most recently, this has included an opportunity to work with an early years network. That opportunity has already resulted in the staff having a more-precise knowledge of the children's particular learning needs.

You supplement that support, seeking out other sources to assist you in making the improvements that you have planned. As a result, you are able to make improvements at the school in a well-researched, planned and carefully managed way. You try out new ideas before adopting them fully. You adapt practice to meet the particular needs at the school. This ensures that, when changes are made, you are able to put them into practice throughout the school quickly and efficiently. There is an active process of continuous improvement at the school.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that the teachers have a secure understanding of what is needed for the pupils to achieve greater depth in their learning and to demonstrate mastery in mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust, the chief executive officer of the trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Leicester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector