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Miss Louise Davidson
Executive Principal
Tuxford Primary Academy
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Dear Miss Davidson

Short inspection of Tuxford Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 26 June 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 the school was judged to be good in October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

You have built a cohesive team who are committed to doing the best they can for the pupils and work hard to support each other. High expectations are seen throughout the school. Staff appreciate the opportunities they have to develop their professional skills and knowledge and, as a result, they are keen to take on new projects and initiatives that will benefit the pupils. For example, the teaching of early reading and writing skills in the early years and key stage 1 is both consistent and effective, leading to improving outcomes for pupils.

Relationships in the school are strong. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and are respectful of staff and of each other. One pupil told me, 'We appreciate our similarities and celebrate our differences.' Pupils enjoy coming to school and value their many learning opportunities, including the wide range of after-school clubs and visits. Adults listen to the views of pupils and take these into account, for example, when looking for a solution to crowded lunchtimes as the school continues to grow. Pupils say that the staggered lunchtime arrangements now enable them to have more room to play and socialise. There is a calm and friendly atmosphere in the playground and I saw pupils taking part in a range of activities including football, table tennis and using large play equipment. There are also areas set aside for quiet play and I saw two boys using a construction kit to 'make a Greek temple', following up some of their previous learning.

Most parents who gave their views during the inspection spoke highly of the school, praising the staff for being caring and supportive, showing 'a massive amount of dedication' and 'providing a safe and welcoming environment'. Parents told me that the school communicates well through various means, including newsletters, texts and meetings. The school arranges many events where parents can get involved in school life and their children's learning, though these are not always well attended.

The previous inspection recommended that you should raise standards in mathematics and reading to at least the national average, by making sure pupils can read widely and use their mathematical skills to solve real-life problems. In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading exceeded the national average. Outcomes in mathematics were broadly average. You are now striving to improve standards further and increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard in reading and mathematics and greater depth in writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

There are systems in place that are well understood by staff so that any concerns can be followed up thoroughly and quickly. Staff receive regular training to make sure they have up-to-date knowledge of the most recent guidance. This includes online training opportunities, which have included modules relating to radicalisation and extremism.

Pupils enjoy coming to the school and say it is a safe and friendly place where bullying is rare. They can explain the difference between 'falling out with friends' and bullying. Pupils have confidence in adults to help them sort out any problems. Staff know pupils well and are vigilant in ensuring their well-being.

Attendance is broadly average. Persistent absences have reduced and are now in line with national averages.

You have been tenacious in following up concerns about pupils' safety. For example, you have campaigned for a crossing outside the school to make it safer for pupils when arriving or going home. You also make sure pupils can recognise risks and learn to keep themselves safe. For example, during the inspection Year 6 pupils worked with a police officer to check the speed of vehicles travelling along the road outside the school.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are suitably detailed and of good quality. You and a member of the governing body check documentation regularly to make sure it meets all requirements.

Inspection findings

- School leaders have a comprehensive knowledge of the progress pupils are making. They make regular checks and, where pupils are at risk of falling behind,

they make individual plans and provide additional support if necessary. They set ambitious targets for all pupils and track their progress towards them.

- Leaders and teachers often work with their counterparts in other academies in the Diverse Academies Learning Partnership (DALP) trust. They have regular meetings where they can check the school's work with other colleagues and share ideas and successes. Governors and the trust's executive officers have a good understanding of what the school does well and what could be further improved.
- Pupils' books are neat and well presented. Pupils take a pride in their work. Books show that pupils are making progress over time and that the work is of a good standard. Topic books show that pupils are using their literacy skills in different subjects and for different types of writing. Mathematics books show that pupils are having regular opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge in real-life contexts.
- Pupils enjoy the learning challenges they are given. They are developing their skills of self-evaluation and are able to check their own and each other's work using a checklist. Pupils told me that this helps them to improve their work.
- Pupils read accurately and with good understanding. Younger pupils in particular are very enthusiastic and tackle unfamiliar words with confidence, using their knowledge of the sounds letters make. Pupils use their reading skills to find information, to help them complete other tasks or simply to enjoy a story.
- Standards in the school are improving. Since the last inspection there has been a steady improvement in the outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2, though progress remains broadly in line with national averages. The school's own assessment information shows that, in each year group, the majority of pupils are on track to achieve the standards expected for their age by the end of the academic year. In Year 2 and Year 6, school data shows the proportion of pupils who are on track to achieve the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics is at least in line with recent national averages.
- The proportion of pupils on track to achieve the higher standard varies between year groups. Although the school's data shows improvements on previous years' outcomes, you have identified that recent increases are not yet secure and this remains a priority for the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- rates of progress continue to improve in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2, in order that recent improvements in reading are maintained and standards in writing and mathematics rise to be in line with reading
- the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected standards at the end of key stages 1 and 2 increases so that it is at least in line with national averages.

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 Nottinghamshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jane Salt
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I carried out a learning walk with you, visiting a number of classes, to observe learning. I looked at a sample of pupils' books to consider the standard of work and the progress being made. I talked with a group of pupils and listened to some pupils read.

I held meetings with you and the vice principal and also met with other members of staff to discuss the school's work. I also met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and the acting chief executive officer of the trust.

I reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including policies and records relating to safeguarding, and your self-evaluation document and improvement plan. I took into account 86 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and spoke to some parents informally during the inspection. There were no responses to the staff and pupil online questionnaires.