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Mrs Jan Thomson
Headteacher
Court-De-Wyck Church School
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Dear Mrs Thomson

Short inspection of Court-De-Wyck Church School

Following my visit to the school on 20 March 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 January 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since that inspection, the school has joined the Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust.

The leadership team and governors are ambitious for pupils, staff, and for the future success of the school. You provide sharply focused and strong leadership. Since your appointment to the school in October 2017, you have continued the development of a culture of high expectations within a caring and supportive environment. Staff morale is high, as demonstrated in their very positive responses to the staff questionnaire. All those responding recorded that they are proud to work at the school and feel supported in their professional development. You have created an ethos of openness and transparency, where systems to improve the quality of teaching are leading to improving outcomes for pupils. You are making particularly good use of opportunities within the academy trust for staff to develop their teaching and leadership skills, to share expertise and to learn from each other.

You, other leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and the aspects you are all working to improve. Very thorough processes for checking the quality of teaching and pupils' progress inform the school's detailed plans for ongoing improvement. The impact of actions taken are rigorously evaluated and modified promptly, if necessary, to improve the positive difference they are making. Revised procedures for checking pupils' skills and understanding are enabling teachers to identify quickly which pupils need additional support, as

well as those who are ready to be challenged more. Teachers take swift action to adjust activities in lessons, so they increasingly reflect precisely what pupils need to learn next. Pupils receive clear guidance about what they need to know and include in their work if they are to achieve the expected or higher standard. As a result, in all year groups, more pupils are making good or rapid progress this year in reading, writing and mathematics. You recognise that these procedures need to embed in whole-school practice to ensure that they make the best possible impact on the quality of teaching, and the progress pupils make.

Most parents and carers express their strong support for the school. They consider that their children are well cared for and that teaching is effective. Comments such as, 'My children are very happy and the teaching staff are good' characterised many parents' views. A very few parents expressed their concern about the number of staffing changes since the last inspection, feeling that it has led to some uncertainty about the school's direction of travel. Most, however, are now confident that the school is moving forwards positively and is aspirational for their children's personal and academic achievements. Pupils enjoy school. They told me that their lessons are interesting and that adults listen to them and help them with their learning. They particularly enjoy being part of a 'Crew', as pupils from all year groups contribute to the school's success and 'no pupil is a passenger'. This collective responsibility supports pupils' strong sense of belonging, the respect they have for each other and adults, and their pride in the school.

Improvement since the last inspection has been marked. Pupils' written work is often linked to their topic work, which provides the vehicle for pupils to explore a range of different forms of writing. Pupils are helped to learn spellings appropriate to their year group and there is a clear expectation that pupils will spell these accurately in their work. Teachers provide incisive personalised feedback to pupils who respond positively and work hard to improve the quality of their writing. These actions have improved the standard of pupils' writing and the accuracy of their spelling in all year groups.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You promote a strong culture of safeguarding in the school and all those involved in the school community are committed to keeping pupils safe. Staff work hard to get to know each pupil well and take action quickly if they have any concerns. You welcome external evaluations of your procedures to ensure that they are up to date and understood by all. You work closely with other agencies, and seek timely advice and guidance when making referrals.

Pupils told me that they feel safe and well looked after at school, and that they trust adults to support them if they have a concern. They said that bullying was rare, but that sometimes pupils do 'fall out', although 'it usually doesn't last long' and that typically their friendships are strong. You and your governors are confident that actions taken, including bespoke support for pupils, have improved significantly the behaviour of some pupils that had given cause for concern. Through your

curriculum, you teach pupils how to manage personal risk, including when using modern technology. All the parents who completed the questionnaire stated that their children are happy and safe at school.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed the particular aspects of the school's work we would focus on. First, we considered how leaders are ensuring that the most able pupils in key stage 2 reach their potential in reading and writing. You identified this as a key priority for improvement this year, following a fall in the progress made by this group of pupils in the 2017 national assessments.
- Pupils are exposed to a wide range of texts and encouraged to read those that they may find challenging. The most able readers in Years 5 and 6 told me of their enjoyment of reading, and what sort of books they liked best. Their pleasure was summed up by one pupil who explained, 'I get to play my own special movie in my head.' Whole-class texts are frequently used to extend and enrich pupils' knowledge and skills in reading and writing. For example, Years 5 and 6 pupils explained how their reading of 'The Kite Rider' is broadening their understanding of China as a nation. By sharing the reading of the book, they also have a greater appreciation of how to develop the way characters and settings are described. Pupils explained how they are able to use this skill in their own work, to make it more interesting and to engage the reader. Across the school, displays of 'my best writing yet' help to reinforce to pupils that they can always strive to do even better.
- This culture of high expectations is helping to ensure that standards in reading and writing are rising in all year groups, and that the most able pupils are sustaining their greater depth standard, including through key stage 2. You recognise the need to further embed the school's use of tracking and assessment to ensure that even more pupils reach the higher standards.
- Our next line of enquiry focused on how well leadership is ensuring that children make good progress through the early years. You have ensured that staff have access to high-quality training. This has helped them to improve the accuracy of their assessment of children's knowledge and skills, and their planning of activities to move children's learning on swiftly. Good use is made of resources to promote children's curiosity and embrace their interests. As a result, children engage enthusiastically in the broad range of activities provided, both indoors and outside. They sustain their concentration for extended periods of time and cooperate well, both in their imaginative play and when working with an adult. Adults' questioning supports the good progress children make by challenging them to explain their ideas and give reasons for their actions.
- Our last line of enquiry explored how well pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported to make good progress. You have ensured that the procedures for checking which pupils need additional help are clear, understood by all, and implemented rigorously. When extra help is needed, a learning profile is constructed for individual pupils. Three short-term targets are agreed. Pupils are fully involved in the writing of these targets, and in the regular reviews of their progress towards achieving them. This inclusive approach helps

to ensure that pupils contribute productively in their own improvement journey. The impact of the support provided is frequently evaluated and, if it is not working, it is modified quickly to better address pupils' needs. The school's assessment information, together with pupils' work, shows the school's approach is successful in helping pupils to make good progress from their starting points.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the procedures used to assess, track and improve pupils' progress in all year groups are fully consolidated, so even more pupils achieve the expected or greater depth standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Cogher
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, four governors and the assistant director of learning and achievement from the Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust. You joined me in observing learning in classrooms. Together, we looked at pupils' workbooks and the school's information on the progress being made by current pupils. I spoke to pupils in class, and at breaktime and lunchtime. We looked at a range of school documents, including the school's plans for improvement and the evaluation of its own performance. I looked at a range of documentation relating to safeguarding. The views of parents were gathered through their responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the results of a recent parent survey conducted by the school. I also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires.