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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Anne Senior
Executive Headteacher
Anthony Curton CofE Primary School
The Chase
Walpole St Peter
Wisbech
Cambridgeshire
PE14 7NG

Dear Mrs Senior

Short inspection of Anthony Curton CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 February 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 June 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

I was impressed by the environment for learning that staff create, including attractive, high-quality displays which celebrate pupils' achievements. You have maintained the positive atmosphere of the school, in which pupils feel valued and enjoy learning. Staff, governors and pupils are proud to be part of Anthony Curton School.

You have developed a strong leadership team which effectively supports your partnership school and other schools within the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust. All staff and governors ensure that pupils make good personal and academic progress. Since the previous inspection, you have improved the quality of the school's strategic plans. Leaders now review the precise targets identified in the plans for improving teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes. The multi-academy trust, alongside the governors, looks ahead and plans well for the future development of the school.

You have maintained the good standard of behaviour across the school over time. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and are respectful and tolerant towards one another. Parents and carers have a high level of confidence in the school and its leadership. All parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, indicated that their children are happy and feel safe in school. Pupils also agree with

this view. Text comments from parents praised the commitment of staff to pupils' well-being and education, including the range of extra-curricular activities provided.

Vulnerable pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are provided with targeted support that meets their social, behavioural and academic needs effectively. Differences in outcomes between these groups and their fellow peers are diminishing across the school.

Good-quality professional training and opportunities to compare marking and assessment of pupils' work with other schools have improved the accuracy of teachers' assessment. Consequently, the school has accurate information on how well pupils are achieving. This is checked diligently to pinpoint any underachievement. You and your leaders have correctly identified the need to improve pupils' progress across the school, especially for the most able pupils, so that a greater proportion exceed age-related expectations in English and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. You ensure that all staff and governors place the highest priority on keeping pupils safe and provide effective pastoral care for pupils. You have created a secure and caring environment in which pupils and staff feel valued. Safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose and of a high quality. Staff and governors receive regular up-to-date child protection training.

Pupils understand the difference between falling out and bullying. The curriculum teaches pupils how to keep safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet. They talk confidently about road safety and the dangers of electricity. Pupils value their friendships and the support they receive from staff when they have any worries.

Leaders work with parents to improve attendance. Persistent absence is reducing. Unauthorised absence is not tolerated and, when required, fines are issued.

Inspection findings

- In order to check whether the school remains good, my first line of enquiry explored how leaders are improving pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6. This is because progress in all three subjects decreased in 2017. Progress in reading and mathematics was in the lowest 20% of schools nationally. Progress in writing was in the lowest 10%.
- We saw many examples of good progress in English and mathematics in books and lessons for all groups of pupils in key stage 2. Evidence in books showed examples of pupils writing well for a variety of purposes, using a range of appropriate vocabulary, punctuation and grammar effectively across the curriculum. We observed Year 6 pupils combining their English skills and

historical knowledge to produce high-quality biographies of Anne Frank. We could see that the new teaching techniques in mathematics are developing pupils' understanding of mathematical ideas more securely so that they can explain their learning and calculate difficult problems.

- Leaders have ensured that teachers and teaching assistants have improved their subject knowledge and have higher expectations of pupils' work. This has enabled staff to improve pupils' enjoyment and progress in reading, especially for the reluctant readers. Year 6 pupils I listened to read spoke confidently about the text they were reading.
- Pupils' work and the school's assessment information indicate that current pupils are making good progress in key stage 2, especially in Year 6. However, we saw occasions when pupils had fewer opportunities to develop their skills in both English and mathematics. We agreed that there is still further work to be done to ensure that more pupils make consistently good progress over time.
- I also investigated whether the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged in English and mathematics across the school. This is because, in 2017, too few pupils exceeded age-related expectations, especially in key stage 1.
- Throughout the school, we saw clear examples where the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged so that they make good progress in their learning. The most able mathematicians in Years 5 and 6 are challenged effectively through their work with an expert in mathematics. We observed Year 2 pupils comparing characters from different stories to a high standard, prompted by effective teacher questioning.
- However, evidence also shows that some middle-attaining and most-able pupils are not moved on quickly enough in their learning. These pupils had fewer opportunities to deepen their understanding and knowledge so that they could exceed age-related expectations. You have already identified this issue in the school's development plans. Leaders have ensured that staff know what pupils have to achieve to meet the higher standard in all year groups in English and mathematics.
- My next line of enquiry was to consider the quality of provision in the early years. This is because the proportion of children meeting the expected standard of a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has declined over time.
- The early years children settle into school routines quickly. They benefit from vibrant learning environments inside and outside. These promote learning across all areas, enabling children to develop their skills well. We observed children using their knowledge of phonics to support their spelling and writing about space. A variety of challenging activities enabled pupils to demonstrate their mathematical knowledge. For example, children named two-dimensional shapes correctly as they coloured in a space rocket.
- The Reception children are keen and focused on their learning. As a result, evidence shows that they are making good progress from their various starting points. A higher proportion of children are targeted to reach a good level of

development this academic year and evidence seen during the inspection indicates that they are on track to do so.

- My final line of enquiry was to ascertain if the school's plans contained robust actions for improvement, as this was an area to develop in the previous school inspection report. Evidence shows that leaders and governors know the school's strengths well and have identified the appropriate priorities to improve teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes. Targeted, measurable actions have been set and are monitored regularly. You and your senior leaders check very thoroughly the impact of the actions being taken to improve the school and identify clearly what more needs to be done. Governors ask pertinent questions regarding the strategic plans to support further school development. Leaders have good capacity to ensure continuous school improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching is consistently effective in enabling all pupils to make good progress in English and mathematics across the school
- pupils are challenged and extended effectively so that a greater proportion reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Ely, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Julie Harrison
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, other leaders, governors and a representative of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust. I listened to some Year 6 pupils read, and spoke with a group of pupils. I looked at a range of documentation, including information about the school's self-evaluation and plans for future improvement. I examined policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils, including the school's single central record of pre-employment checks on staff. I visited all classrooms within the school to observe pupils' learning and scrutinised the work in pupils' books with either yourself or other senior leaders. I took account of the views of 11 staff members, 18 pupils and 25 parents who responded to Ofsted's online surveys. Written views of 18 parents from the free-text service were also considered.