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Mr Christy Coulter
Principal
Stockwell Academy
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Dear Mr Coulter

Short inspection of Stockwell Academy

Following my visit to the school on 30 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, supported by your effective governing body, have acted resolutely and bravely to address areas of weakness. Consequently, the school is now well placed to further improve. Your leadership is inspirational and your relationships with all stakeholders are strong. Along with your deputy headteacher, you have established a leadership team and staff who share your high expectations and ethos. The 'Stockwell Spirit' emanates from all staff and pupils.

Stockwell Academy is a welcoming, friendly and nurturing school where staff help pupils to develop well, academically and personally. Pupils are happy to attend and say that they enjoy their learning. They are cheerful, enthusiastic and show positive attitudes towards their school and each other. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are very positive about the school. Parents are particularly positive about the impact of the special educational needs (SEN) coordinator and also about you. One parent commented, 'The headteacher is brilliant. This school has been right for my child since day one.' Another parent said she was 'over the moon with the SEN support'.

You have developed middle leadership and are committed to working in partnership with schools within your academies trust. This is improving leaders' skills in moderating pupils' work, monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and using data to ensure that pupils are progressing well. Staff take full responsibility for pupil

outcomes and are held to account for their progress. Consequently, pupils in most year groups are making better progress than previously.

Your sharp use of data informs the correct priorities for further development. Leaders assist teachers in improving outcomes by researching and observing best practice which is then communicated throughout school. Middle leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of their areas of responsibility. They are very enthusiastic and plan appropriate actions to improve attainment and progress within their subjects. Leaders recognise that, while improvements have recently been made to the teaching of writing, there is still more to be done to ensure that improvements are consistently applied and basic skills are developed.

Governance at the school is strong. Governors visit school regularly. They offer support and challenge where appropriate and they have a good understanding about the school's performance. Governors have overseen some major changes recently, including changing academy sponsor. This has ensured that you and your staff can focus on meeting the needs of the pupils. Members of the trust have contributed to strengthening the leadership of the school.

At the time of the last inspection, inspectors asked you to make sure work was well matched to pupils' abilities, to increase the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels, to develop pupils' reading skills and to increase expectations of teachers with regards to presentation. Leaders have responded well. They now ensure that work is suitable for all pupils and that staff have raised their expectations that pupils, even in the early years, can attain the higher standards. The new approach to reading shows pupils are exposed to high-quality books and taught sophisticated reading skills so they are now making good progress. Pupils' presentation of their work has improved significantly and this too reflects teachers' high expectations.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is an established culture of safeguarding at the school and there is a clear ethos that everybody is responsible for safeguarding. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders have ensured that all members of staff and governors are regularly trained in different aspects of safeguarding. Leaders and governors ensure that records are robust and relevant checks on visitors and staff are carried out before they enter or join the school.

You know the families of pupils who attend the school very well and are vigilant about their welfare, especially any whose circumstances make them vulnerable. You work closely with local agencies to ensure that pupils receive the care and support they need. Attendance of pupils is rigorously analysed and checks are made to ensure that all pupils are safe.

Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents agree. Pupils could talk extensively about 'respecting each other because we're all different'. Respect is one of the six values decided by the school community. These are regularly taught through whole-

school assemblies. Pupils say that bullying is rare but are confident that, if it happens, an adult would stop it immediately. Pupils are aware of how to stay safe online.

Inspection findings

- As part of the inspection, I explored how effective leaders' actions have been in improving progress in writing throughout key stage 2, especially for boys and the most able. This is because, in 2017, progress in writing was weaker than in reading and mathematics. The introduction of a new approach to writing has been successful and assessment information shows that high numbers of pupils are now making good progress with a few making even better progress than this. However, leaders agreed that the new approach does not yet provide opportunities for pupils to develop their skills by writing at length in different subjects.
- The teaching of writing engages boys well and they enjoy writing for a purpose. Their presentation is good. Teachers are very aware of the individual needs of the boys in their class and give insightful ways for them to improve. Work is well matched to the ability of pupils meaning all are suitably challenged, including the most able. Leaders are providing staff with training to deepen their understanding of the higher standards which is now positively impacting on pupils' achievement.
- I also looked at the effectiveness of teaching in the early years with a focus on boys. This is because the proportion of pupils leaving Reception achieving a good level of development is lower than the national proportion and boys perform less well than girls. As a result of strong leadership, provision in the early years is now effectively meeting the needs of all children. Current assessment information shows that all children make at least good progress from their starting points and strategies such as 'in the moment planning' means that standards are improving, including for boys.
- The early years' leader knows the needs of the cohort well and responds to children's needs by providing them with a range of well-planned activities. Communication-friendly areas provide children with the opportunity to develop their speech and language. Adults encourage boys to write by giving them a purpose, for example making driving licenses and writing about superheroes. Parents are welcomed into the provision frequently and they regularly contribute to their child's profile.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in phonics declined in 2017 and was significantly below the national average. Leaders have responded well and from September 2017, have implemented a new approach with regular assessment built in. Consequently, pupils' needs are well met and they are making good progress.
- Attendance of pupils was a key line of enquiry as there had been an overall decline in 2017. While the systems and procedures for managing attendance are robust, leaders do acknowledge the significant difference between boys and girls and recognise the attendance of boys needs to improve.

- The final focus of my inspection was to investigate how effectively leaders are ensuring that a higher proportion of pupils attain higher standards by the end of key stage 1 in reading and writing. Recent training has ensured that teachers are now more aware of the increased expectations. The whole-school approach to the teaching of writing shows the clear development of pupils' skills. These are then applied in final pieces of work that reflect high expectations. Assessment information shows that a higher proportion of pupils are currently on track to attain this by the end of the current school year. However, leaders have recognised that there needs to be a clear focus on the acquisition of basic skills throughout key stage 1.
- Pupils' reading exercise books show strong progress over time. Leaders accurately identified that teaching higher-order reading skills, such as inference and making predictions, were weak across school. The implementation of a new strategy is ensuring that these areas are now effectively taught through whole-class reading sessions. Consequently, pupils are making better progress than last year and greater proportions of pupils are attaining higher standards throughout key stage 1.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- outcomes in writing continue to improve by:
 - ensuring that the teaching of writing in key stage 1 clearly focuses on pupils' secure acquisition of basic skills
 - providing pupils in key stage 2 with opportunities to write across the curriculum to enable them to practise and hone their writing skills to reach the higher standards
- the attendance of boys improves.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for the City of Kingston upon Hull. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Simon McCarthy
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, 15 parents, two members of the governing body, including the chair, and three representatives from your academies trust. I

held meetings with the school's leaders for mathematics and English and early years. I talked with small groups of pupils during lessons and informally during playtime and during lunchtime. Along with you, I visited classes to observe teaching and learning across the school and I scrutinised the work in pupils' books. I listened to eight pupils read.

I examined a range of documentation, including that relating to attendance and safeguarding. I took account of the minutes of the governing body meetings, the school's evaluation of how well it is doing, improvement priorities, assessment information and the pupil premium action plan. I reviewed the school's website. I considered the responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also considered the responses to Ofsted's questionnaires for staff and pupils.