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Mr Rob Gilbey
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Gilbey

Short inspection of Robert Miles Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 19 March 2019, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education since the last inspection. The school converted to an academy in 2016, as a founding member of the Equals Academy Trust. You, the staff team and governors share a commitment to providing high-quality learning experiences so that children can achieve their very best. Together, you have continued to provide a stimulating learning environment where pupils grow and flourish. Your commitment is supported by the leaders of the academy trust, who provide strong support and challenge to create a climate for continuous school improvement.

Pupils were keen to talk to me about their school. They enjoy their learning and spoke with enthusiasm about it. They told me that teachers 'always make the lessons interesting so you remember what's taught'. Pupils described how learning is brought to life through performance and drama and through the exciting visits and learning opportunities that are provided. They value the residential visits that are organised for them and appreciate the wide range of after-school clubs that are on offer. Pupils feel that the school is a welcoming and happy environment, and that 'it lives up to its values'. Pupils know the values of the school well and their behaviour reflects this. They are polite, respectful and cooperate well together.

Pupils have access to a wide range of after-school sports clubs and regularly take part in inter-school competitions. You have appointed a specialist sports coach to ensure that pupils receive a high standard of physical education. The school achieved the Sports Games Gold Mark in 2018.

Parents who spoke to me at the start of the day and those who responded to the online survey were positive about the school. All agreed that their children were well taught and were making good progress. Many commented about how happy their child was at school. They told me that you were approachable and that you respond quickly to any concerns that they may have. Parents feel that they are well informed about their children's progress. Several parents commented about the breadth of opportunities that are provided by the school and about how these have helped their children to grow in confidence. Almost all would recommend this school to another parent or carer.

The leaders of the academy trust provide strong challenge and support to the leadership team. They work with members of the governing body to help them to gain a greater understanding of how the school can continue to improve. Governors have a clear view of their roles and responsibilities and have access to a range of online training to support them. The support and training they have received has strengthened their ability to challenge leaders. Members of the governing body are keen to help the school to improve further.

You have an accurate view of the school's strengths and the areas that require further development. Attainment at the expected standard at the end of Year 6 in 2018 was above the national average for reading, writing and mathematics. However, attainment at the higher standard was slightly below that achieved nationally in writing and mathematics. Progress in mathematics for all pupils also declined in 2018 to below that achieved nationally. The progress of disadvantaged pupils was also significantly below that of other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics in 2018. The leadership team has identified that some groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, are not making sufficient progress in reading and mathematics and have developed a clear action plan to address this. The key lines of enquiry for the inspection focused on the progress of these groups, and the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics.

During my tour of the school to see the learning that was taking place, I saw that the teaching of mathematics effectively promoted pupils' learning. I observed that younger pupils were helped to gain and reinforce their understanding through the use of practical apparatus. Teachers made their expectations clear and this enabled pupils to engage in learning quickly. Teachers challenged pupils to develop their understanding and ensured that they used and understood correct mathematical vocabulary.

I also looked at pupils' work in their mathematics books, when you were present. These showed that the most able pupils were set additional challenges to deepen and extend their learning. Pupils who found tasks more challenging were supported in their learning by appropriate learning activities. I noted that pupils' misconceptions in their mathematics work were routinely addressed and that pupils responded to these by correcting their work.

I also observed some English lessons. Pupils who require additional support to accelerate their progress in reading and writing are taught in smaller groups. I saw

that in all classes writing and reading comprehension skills were taught well. Teachers displayed strong subject knowledge and used skilful questioning to help pupils to deepen their understanding of a text and to improve their writing. Pupils were fully engaged in their learning.

My observations in classrooms were also reflected in pupils' writing books, which show that pupils are making strong progress in their writing, particularly in Year 3. Presentation and handwriting are of a high standard, reflecting pupils' pride in their work. Teachers use the curriculum to provide a wide range of stimulating writing opportunities and there are displays of pupils' high-quality writing across the school. Pupils are proud of their writing and keen to talk about the topics they have studied.

I also met with the special educational needs coordinator to discuss the progress of pupils who have additional needs. There are clear plans in place, to ensure that pupils make progress, which are linked to a wide range of interventions. Plans include the views of pupils and their parents to ensure that learning activities are tailored to the way that each pupil learns best.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding and leaders have ensured that all arrangements are fit for purpose. You make sure that all staff and volunteers are appropriately checked before they start to work or volunteer at the school.

Staff receive regular training and are knowledgeable about safeguarding. They are clear about how to refer concerns using an online tool. They spoke of the need to be aware of pupils who may be most at risk and the need to be vigilant.

The designated safeguarding leader is clear about child protection procedures and is tenacious in escalating concerns to ensure that pupils and their families receive the support that they need. Leaders provide access to a range of support and help to promote pupils' emotional health and well-being. This is valued by pupils; they feel that there is always someone who listens and helps.

Pupils also told me that they feel safe in school. They report that bullying is rare and that adults would sort it out quickly if it did occur. They are taught about e-safety and spoke confidently to me about how to stay safe online.

Absence from school is carefully monitored and, as a result, attendance has been consistently higher than the national average for several years. Leaders have clear procedures to address poor attendance and, as a result, the numbers of pupils who are persistently absent has also reduced.

Inspection findings

- I analysed pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups. You guided me through the school's tracking system, which shows that a higher proportion of pupils are working at age-related expectations across all year groups. It also shows that the gap between disadvantaged and other pupils is beginning to close in Year 5 and Year 6, but in some subjects for pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 it has got wider. Currently, the use of pupil premium funding is not resulting in disadvantaged pupils making enough progress to enable them to catch up with their peers.
- Leaders have implemented a range of strategies to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils. These strategies and the targets for improvement are not monitored rigorously enough to ensure that they are having the impact that was intended.
- Although pupils and parents are pleased with the curriculum on offer, and it currently provides a wide range of stimulating writing opportunities, there are some shortcomings. The curriculum does not ensure that it promotes deep and secure learning as widely as it could. It does not provide disadvantaged pupils with the very broad range of experiences, skills and knowledge to enable them to make stronger progress. This already forms a key area of the school improvement plan. However, some subject leaders do not have the expertise to lead this development. An important feature of the plan is to provide additional training for subject leaders to ensure that the new curriculum improves progress for all pupils, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The school does not have a sufficiently strong approach to mathematics mastery. The Equals Academy Trust leaders and school leaders have recognised that this is a key element in improving progress in mathematics. The mathematics leader has not yet received training on how to tailor this approach to the needs of the school and to ensure that it improves progress in mathematics for all pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they identify the training needs of subject leaders to ensure that they are fully equipped to deliver the school's new developing curriculum
- the pupil premium funding, to support disadvantaged pupils, is used successfully to improve progress in reading and mathematics for these pupils
- they improve the monitoring of the use of the pupil premium funding on the progress made by disadvantaged pupils, to ascertain which strategies have the greatest impact.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the Equals 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

Heather Hawkes
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, the subject leaders with responsibility for mathematics and English, the pupil premium leader and the special educational needs coordinator. I also met with two governors, including the chair of governing body, the trust's school improvement adviser and the chief executive officer from the Equals Academy Trust. I visited all of the classes with you and we looked at pupils' work together. I spoke with pupils informally during lessons and formally during a group discussion. I also observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons. I met with the designated safeguarding leader and examined a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies. I also looked at information relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour and the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan. I took into account the 46 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 43 responses to Ofsted's free-text service. I also spoke with a small number of parents at the start of the school day and considered the 19 responses to the staff survey and the 60 responses to the pupil survey.