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7 December 2017

Mrs Deborah Reynolds
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Dear Mrs Reynolds

Short inspection of Norwood Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 November 2017, 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

You and your deputy headteacher know your school well and between you possess the necessary skills and attributes to continue to improve the school. You know what the school does well, but also what you need to do to make the provision even better than it is at present. Your staff unreservedly support you, and parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, share your desire to make the school an exciting and creative place in which pupils are able to achieve. One parent wrote about her two children's views of the school: 'They both consider Norwood as their second home. They both look forward to going to school and are happy with everything.' This is what you aim to achieve and you successfully accomplish this.

You regularly monitor, evaluate and review the work of the school and use this information to inform school improvement planning. You are equally open to looking outwards to share good practice: your work with two other schools in your 'triad' scheme enables you to gain external validation of your effective work.

Pupils in the school are exceptionally polite and it was a pleasure to spend a day observing them in their lessons, meeting with them in small groups or sitting with them over lunch. They are rightly very proud of their school, wear their uniform smartly and are curious and inquisitive learners. You have increased the number of clubs and activities on offer, and pupils appreciate this. Pupils' leadership skills in Year 6 are actively developed by giving each of them a designated responsibility, whether this be lunchtime buddies, reading buddies or being attached to a child in Reception Year.

Pupils typically experience good-quality teaching. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and they convey their enthusiasm for their subjects. Pupils respond with similar enthusiasm and are keen to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through their creative and neatly presented work. Pupils told me they are encouraged to 'try our hardest and not to give up'. Teachers use questioning skilfully to check that pupils have understood and they devise tasks and activities which present a suitable degree of challenge. This motivates pupils to be resilient, to persevere, and hence to succeed. One pupil told me, 'If you finish the work, the teacher gives you more difficult work which makes you think harder.'

Pupils make good progress over time. You are aware that in Reception Year, children's good level of development is lowered overall by weaker writing and you have ensured that writing features in your action plan for the early years provision. In addition, you have organised three writing workshops to enable parents to support their children at home. Pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 typically demonstrate good progress over time. However, progress in mathematics was poor at the end of key stage 2 in 2017. This also affected pupils' combined progress scores in reading, writing and mathematics. You have acted swiftly to address this, and mathematics features as a high priority in your school improvement plan for this academic year.

Members of the governing body have taken on a more strategic approach towards monitoring the work of the school. They confidently talk about the school's strengths based on the evidence they gather, and also about what the school needs to do to improve. They understand their role in bringing about school improvement. The five school governor days are skilfully planned to allow them to focus on aspects of the school improvement plan, and always incorporate activities to gather information on safeguarding procedures and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding children is at the heart of what the school stands for. All staff have received and read the latest guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education' (2016), and demonstrate a strong awareness of safeguarding issues. All staff have also undergone training in the government's 'Prevent' duty to combat radicalisation. Staff, including those who join the school mid-year, receive up-to-date training on safeguarding matters. Minor administrative errors found on the school's record of

recruitment checks of the suitability of staff were immediately rectified to make it compliant.

Pupils feel safe and receive guidance about issues related to safeguarding through regular visitors to the school and also in lessons. The inspector's review of a case study relating to a particularly vulnerable child shows that the school's leaders go above and beyond what is expected of them to ensure each child's safety.

Inspection findings

- In order to ascertain that the school remains good, my first line of enquiry was to look at how well the school had responded to the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. These appear to have been largely addressed through decisive leadership. For example, when I visited your early years provision, I observed children actively engaged in purposeful learning activities both inside and in the outside space. At the end of each session, teachers and other adults ensure that they use language related to what the children have 'learned', rather than what they have 'done'.
- I also observed teachers using questioning effectively to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers would not accept a simple 'yes' or 'no', but would push pupils to justify and explain their answers. This better quality of response was also evident when I looked through pupils' books, where teachers had provided pupils with additional tasks when assessing their work.
- You have also improved the quality of how you record your observations of teaching. Your records now make clear what teachers have to do to improve their practice, although the records still do not make enough reference to the progress made by different groups of pupils.
- My second line of enquiry looked at why pupils' progress in mathematics dipped significantly at the end of key stage 2 in 2017, and what action the school's leaders had taken to address this shortfall. This dip also resulted in a letter of concern from the local authority. Although you had expected a dip, having identified some individual pupils through case studies, the drop in standards was greater than you had forecast. You immediately completed a detailed analysis of the examination papers and found that a significant number of pupils had not completed the third paper and struggled to apply their reasoning skills.
- You have now chosen to teach mathematics in mixed-ability groups using a scheme adopted in the Far East. You have also introduced mathematics journals which allow pupils actively to demonstrate their reasoning skills. You have also subscribed to the Cambridgeshire mathematics hub to gather and share good practice. Master classes also take place on a fortnightly basis.
- My visits to mathematics lessons, as well as my review of your most up-to-date information on pupils' progress and scrutiny of pupils' books, indicate that the rate of progress has improved. Pupils in Year 6 are working at a standard now that was only achieved by the previous cohort in March 2017. Pupils enjoy using the new mathematics course books and told me that they like to work in mixed

groups, as this enables the most able mathematicians to support those who find some of the concepts more challenging.

- My next line of enquiry looked at how effectively the governing body ensures that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is deployed appropriately to diminish the differences between these pupils' achievement and others nationally. In 2017, the school's disadvantaged pupils did not make as much progress as other pupils at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- The school has produced a detailed evaluation of the impact of the pupil premium funding for 2016 to 2017 and has published a similarly detailed plan for this academic year. My scrutiny of governors' minutes of meetings shows that they ask the questions about how the money is spent and what the impact of the funding is on pupils' outcomes. The school rightly funded strategies to address the barriers disadvantaged pupils face in the school, namely fluency in reading, weaker vocabulary and understanding of sentence structure, and lower ability on entry in mathematics.
- When I listened to disadvantaged pupils read, they expressed a great love and enjoyment of reading. However, there was a marked difference in the extent to which they were able to apply their phonics skills. You continue to work hard in working with these pupils, and your recently introduced library area, which resembles a home living-room setting, encourages pupils to read from a range of exciting books, particularly the boys.
- Your self-evaluation summary document, although making reference to disadvantaged pupils' progress, is not sufficiently sharp in presenting a detailed analysis of how well this group of pupils achieve. It does, however, state that disadvantaged pupils are discussed at pupil progress meetings and subject review meetings. The progress of disadvantaged pupils rightly remains a focus for the school.
- My final line of enquiry was to look at how well the school's leaders are working to encourage pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who have SEN and/or disabilities to attend school more regularly. Latest published data identified these groups of pupils as attending school less regularly than their classmates.
- You are relentless in your efforts to improve the attendance of these groups of pupils. You communicate with parents regularly and make clear to them the link between regular attendance and achievement. You have well-established systems to telephone home if a child is not in school, and it is not unknown for a member of staff to visit the child's home if you receive no response.
- Pupils' overall attendance is above the national average. Data presented for 2016 to 2017 shows that attendance was below average for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals. You continue to focus on these two groups to bring their attendance closer to that of their peers.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the focus on improving pupils' outcomes across all year groups in mathematics is maintained, particularly with reference to reasoning and application skills, and the impact of the changes to the teaching of mathematics is regularly monitored
- the differences in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally continue to diminish, and that these pupils attend school as regularly as their peers
- records of the quality of teaching make more specific reference to the progress made by different groups of pupils, and self-evaluation documentation contains a sharper analysis of the performance of these groups.

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

Yours sincerely

John Daniell
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the deputy headteacher, as well as the leaders of early years and mathematics, to discuss progress since the previous inspection. I met with the chair and four other members of the governing body to gain their views on the school. I also met with a representative of the local authority, as well as a group of pupils. Two pupils from Year 2 read to me from a book of their choice.

I scrutinised a variety of sources of information, including your self-evaluation summary document; the school's plans for improvement; and assessment information for all year groups. I held a meeting to examine the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures, the records of checks leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children, and information relating to attendance.

I undertook observations of learning across the school, viewed work in pupils' books, and spoke with pupils about their learning when visiting lessons. I took account of the views of 17 staff and nine pupils who responded to the online survey. I also considered the 42 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.