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Mrs Rachel Higgins
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Higgins

Short inspection of Nunnery Wood Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 November 2015 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 May 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

This school is led well. You are doing a good job. Your leadership is clear-sighted and organised and you are supported by a capable senior team and an informed governing body. Across the school, staff and pupils know that leaders set high expectations and that everyone is expected to take on responsibility and do their best.

Since the previous inspection, there have been some significant staff changes, including your appointment as headteacher in September 2015. The handover arrangements from the previous headteacher to you were managed efficiently, which helped you to build on existing strengths and drive further improvements at a purposeful pace. You have not lost any time in creating a sense of team spirit and shared vision. Staff, pupils and parents all have a say and an influence in shaping school policy but there is no doubt that you steer the direction. Doing the best for pupils is at the heart of all decision making. This is the guiding light for school leaders.

You and other leaders have a well-informed understanding of the quality of teaching and learning and an accurate view of the school's current performance. School leaders and governors are ambitious for staff and pupils. Successes are recognised

but, equally, leaders and staff are open and honest about areas where further improvements can be made.

Teaching staff receive clear and specific feedback about their work. Teachers get the chance to learn from one another, to share strong practice and receive support and guidance if necessary. Consequently, teaching continues to be effective and current pupils' progress across early years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is good.

Over the past three years, the strong provision seen in the early years at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained and standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have risen steadily. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards in different subjects have varied. Pupils' performance in writing has been consistently above average, while standards in reading and mathematics dipped in the 2014 tests and then improved in 2015. During this inspection, the reasons behind the variations in Key Stage 2 results in different subjects were examined. It is evident that your work to maintain standards in writing and push standards higher in reading has worked. You know there is still more to be done to make sure that all pupils do as well as possible in mathematics, especially disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

This inspection found that the school's safeguarding arrangements and procedures operate properly and promptly. Training is up to date and record keeping is as it should be. Staff understand the reasons why such systems are in place and their responsibility to put pupil's safety first. Adults at the school can explain what they would do if they had a concern. Pupils' attendance is tracked with great care and attention and the routines for following up absence are efficient and effective. Pupils say they feel valued and safe at school and that adults will always help them, if needs be. Parents and pupils express high levels of confidence in the school's work to keep everyone safe.

Inspection findings

- Leaders' routines for gathering information and using it to drive school improvement have been carefully thought through and work well. In addition to leaders' own checks on the school's work, governors actively seek out external advice and consult with all in the school community. They do this to make sure that they have a well-rounded and objective view of how well the school is doing, how others view its work, and to plan for the future. School leaders frequently ask themselves, 'Is this good enough for the pupils at Nunnery Wood? How do we know? How could it be better?'
- Teaching continues to be good. In the early years, staff show an excellent understanding of how young children learn and the majority of children are well prepared for the next steps in their learning when they move into Key Stage 1.

In both Key Stages 1 and 2 there is some very strong practice, especially in English teaching. Staff expertise is shared and the school's policies for marking, homework and behaviour management are implemented with consistency. Leaders have given careful thought to the introduction of new assessment methods and have taken steps to make sure that all new ways of working are manageable and accurate.

- A recent focus on improving phonics teaching (the sounds that letters represent) in the early part of the school, and the teaching of reading across the whole school, has paid off. The results from the most recent phonics check in Year 1 were above average and standards are continuing to rise. In class, pupils have a good knowledge of letter sounds and can use their skills to help them read and write. Pupils from all year groups say they enjoy books and, around the school, colourful displays promote and celebrate the joy and value of reading. A range of recent new resources, school projects and incentives to encourage regular reading at home and in school have helped standards in all classes to rise.
- In recent times, school leaders have also focused on improving teaching and learning in mathematics and there is a good deal of highly effective mathematics teaching in the school. Even so, standards in mathematics, while improved and improving, are still not as high as they could be, particularly for a small number of the most-able pupils and for some disadvantaged pupils. In just a few cases, teachers' checks on pupils' understanding lack precision and do not fully explore pupils' depth of understanding. This means that some misunderstandings are not picked up and pupils who already understand do not press on as quickly as they might. This is not commonplace but observations made during the inspection, checks on books and conversations with leaders confirm that it does happen in some classes more than others.
- A key focus of this inspection was to check how well disadvantaged pupils are keeping up with others. This was because in 2014, and again in 2015, some disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were some way behind other pupils in reading and mathematics. At the beginning of the inspection, it was quickly apparent that school leaders had already focused their attention and efforts on this matter.
- In December 2014, governors chose to commission an external review of the way pupil premium funding was used in order to get detailed feedback about the impact of their spending upon pupils' achievement. The resulting report gave some helpful recommendations, which leaders have acted upon with marked effect.
- There is now little difference between the performance of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in the early years and in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, disadvantaged pupils do well in writing and are catching up quickly with other pupils in reading. While attainment gaps are closing in all year groups in Key Stage 2, some remain – most noticeably in mathematics. School leaders are alert to this and have set specific targets for individual pupils and teachers. Leaders keep a very close eye on progress in this area and governors receive regular reports so that they know how well pupils are doing.

- School leaders, staff and governors regularly consult with pupils to gather their views about the quality of teaching and learning, safety matters and whether they feel the curriculum meets their needs. They listen to pupils' responses and act upon them. Pupils know this and pupils spoken to during this inspection agreed that they do have a say in what happens at school. They did, however, point out that they would like an even greater say in the range of sports on offer and in planning school assemblies.
- The breadth of subjects taught and pupils' involvement in shaping the curriculum are notable strengths. A 'curriculum charter' sets out pupils' entitlement (agreed between pupils and staff) to a range of activities, subjects and enrichment events.
- It is also worth noting the imaginative ways in which staff weave in exciting activities and promote worthy values through class lessons and whole-school assemblies. Whether learning about Victorian teaching methods or taking part in an act of collective remembrance on Armistice Day, pupils are prompted to reflect on the difference between right and wrong and consider how changes over time have shaped the modern world.
- In lessons, pupils are attentive and responsive to their teachers. In turn, teachers are attentive to their pupils. Staff present themselves as good role models who promote positive attitudes and behaviours and are ready to listen if anyone has a worry or concern. In their responses on Parent View, parents praised the good pastoral care at the school. Any problems or upsets that do arise at school are dealt with swiftly because, as several pupils said, 'Nothing gets past the teachers here. They notice everything.'
- Parents express very positive views about the school and describe it as a 'listening school' with approachable staff and good leadership. A number of parents also commented positively about the information provided for them and the school's work to promote and develop the learning partnership between home and school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- any remaining attainment gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils, especially in mathematics in some Key Stage 2 classes, are reduced further
- there is a focus on sharpening the precision of some teachers' checks on pupils' understanding in mathematics, so that all groups of pupils make the best possible progress in this subject.

Yours sincerely

Martin Pye
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher and two of the assistant headteachers, one of whom is the designated lead for safeguarding in the school. I carried out short observations of teaching and learning in all year groups, most of which were carried out with you and the deputy headteacher. I also met with a group of governors and a group of pupils. In addition, I talked with pupils in the playground, spoke with parents at the end of the school day and held a brief meeting with a representative from the local authority.

By the end of the inspection, there were 44 recent responses and 13 written comments on Parent View. I took account of these and noted the results of the school's own survey of parents' views. I looked at a number of documents, including: records of governors' meetings, external reports about aspects of the school's work, pupils' progress information and the school's own evaluation of its performance. I also checked the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe and talked with several members of staff about safeguarding matters.