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Mr Daniel Pettitt
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Pettitt

Short inspection of Freeman Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 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 November 2010.

This school continues to be good.

Since the last inspection, the leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school. You have made a considerable difference since arriving at the school in 2014, quickly establishing a culture of high expectations. Senior leaders have a clear sense of purpose and share your commitment to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. In a short space of time, you have re-energised the staff and pupils with your drive for continued improvement. Staff, parents and governors all recognise the significant contribution you make to the school.

There have been a number of recent changes that have been challenging but which you have managed well. The four members of staff who joined the school recently have settled quickly with your good support and leadership. As a result, the majority of pupils in the school are making good progress. You and your new deputy head have evaluated accurately and honestly what the school does well and what needs to be done to improve it even further. You have paid particular attention to the Year 5 and 6 pupils recently joining the school, ensuring that they know what is expected of them. Consequently, Year 6 pupils are well prepared for the end of the Key Stage.

All of the school's work has been shared comprehensively with your governing body – which is actively involved in checking the progress that is being made. Everyone is working together to achieve the vision of becoming an even better school. As a result, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Good progress in some other subjects like geography and history, for example, is less explicit because assessment of these subjects is still in its early stages. However,

middle leaders are developing effectively how progress is assessed and evaluated in other areas of the curriculum.

The decision to close the Nursery was made prior to your appointment. You have, however, ensured that the school is well-prepared for the new intake of children to the Reception class in 2015. These children come from a variety of providers. You have put in place additional teacher visits to see children in their homes and the various nurseries that children go to. Because of this, teachers know the children well and plan activities that develop all children's learning. As a result, children have entered the Reception class in 2015 with development that is typical for their age.

Pupils' well-being is at the heart of your work. This has helped to establish a friendly and caring school. Pupils get on well together both in the classroom and during breaktimes. Their behaviour is good and they show very positive attitudes to their learning when working independently and with others. The quality of discussion between pupils during lessons is excellent because pupils are regularly encouraged to talk to each other about their learning. Adults are very astute at spotting when pupils need support. As one pupil put it, 'Teachers will help you if you're struggling and they won't go away until they're absolutely certain that you've got it.'

Safeguarding is effective.

Your systems for checking on all aspects of safeguarding are robust and rigorous. It is clear from parents that you go 'beyond the call of duty to support pupils and families'. Pupils say they feel safe and if they have any worries they know who to go to for help. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree that the school keeps pupils safe and secure. You have provided regular and frequent training to ensure that staff understand how to identify and report concerns effectively. The school's records indicate that any issues are followed up promptly and extensively, and that the school communicates with parents through home-school link books. Pupils report that visits to the school, like that of the local policeman who came to talk about keeping safe during Halloween and firework night, help them to remember about their own and others' safety. Any absence is followed up quickly. You have ensured that pupils' progress is interrupted as little as possible by providing work for pupils who are absent from school through illness.

Inspection findings

At the time of the last inspection, inspectors praised many aspects of the school's work. They recognised the good achievement of the pupils at Key Stage 1 and the pupils' good behaviour. They highlighted a couple of areas for improvement which you have taken action to tackle. Your actions have had a positive impact on moving the school forward.

- The drive for continued improvement is evident in the sustained achievement of pupils at Key Stage 1. Although there was a dip in results in 2014, you quickly addressed this issue so that in 2015 the school's results were once again above the national average. The teaching of phonics has improved

through targeted support and professional development. As a consequence, results improved considerably in 2015 to above the national average.

- The school's own assessment information shows that the proportion of pupils who are achieving expected and better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics continues to improve throughout the school. The school's first cohort of pupils in Year 6 are on track to achieve the national average in 2016. They made good progress during their time in Year 5. You and your governors are robustly reviewing areas for development so that all pupils continue to make good progress.
- You have identified accurately key priorities and are taking appropriate action to address them. For example, as a result of the pupil survey you initiated in the summer, it was found that there were some concerns about the pupils' perception of the behaviour of other children. You discussed this with staff, and as a consequence, modified the behaviour policy to ensure that expectations were very clear to both staff and pupils. Pupils spoken to during the inspection are now very positive about behaviour in the school.
- Children enter the school at a level of development that is typically below that expected, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. However, in 2015 the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was above the national average. This is because teachers plan well for the newly developed outside learning area, and leadership is supporting children's good progress in all areas of the curriculum. Children were eagerly moulding their salt dough to make pots for Diwali and discussing the feel of it with their friends, for example. As a result they were not only reminding each other why these pots are important but also learning to use their fingers to make a good attempt at a pot shape.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- middle leaders' roles are developed so that they take full responsibility for driving whole school improvement
- leaders' regularly evaluate plans for school improvement that are measurable and have sharp targets
- induction processes and policies for new members of staff are robustly followed.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Brock
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, your senior and middle leaders, a parent and four governors. I visited a number of classes, some with you, to observe teaching and look at pupils' work. I met a group of pupils and spoke with many others during lessons and breaktimes. You provided me with recent information about pupils' progress, which I evaluated. I reviewed records about keeping pupils safe and about attendance. I also examined a wide range of other documentary evidence, including that relating to the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans and ongoing monitoring. Views of parents from Parent View were considered, as were the views from 22 staff who completed Ofsted's questionnaire.