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Hazel Spinks  
Headteacher  
Fairstead Community Primary and Nursery School  
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Dear Hazel Spinks

### **Short inspection of Fairstead Community Primary and Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 January 2016, 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 2011.

### **This school continues to be good.**

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

- You have built an ambitious and committed leadership team to support the school's work to raise standards further.
- All of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been tackled effectively.
- Pupils' achievement has improved. From low starting points, pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2 with standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are in line with the national average. In Year 6 last year, disadvantaged pupils achieved better than other pupils.
- You have managed several staffing changes very well, limiting the impact that this has had on pupils' learning. There are some new teachers in school at present, and some with temporary contracts. Leaders are supporting these teachers well so that they deliver good-quality teaching.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. High expectations and a well-organised, nurturing environment provide children with a secure and happy place to learn and make new friends.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They say that they enjoy learning, and that they are very well looked after when they are in school.
- The small number of pupils who find sticking to the rules difficult are very

well supported. The school goes out of its way to help these pupils so that they can continue to learn and do as well as possible.

- Teachers plan lessons that are interesting. Pupils enjoy the full range of subjects that are taught. Teachers provide pupils with feedback about their work that clearly sets out what they need to do in order to improve.
- School improvement plans are focused on the right things. You and your senior leaders know what you need to do to develop the school further and you have a proven track record of making things better.
- Pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1 has been well below average in recent years. Expectations have been raised in this part of the school as well as staffing changes to accelerate improvement. There are signs in Year 2 that this is working: standards in writing and mathematics are improving.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are very high in several classes across the school. In these classes, the standard of pupils' work is clearly higher than in some of the other classes. This is most noticeable in upper Key Stage 2 and in one of the Year 2 classes. Here, pupils are very proud of their work and take great care to present it neatly and with pride. The high quality of pupils' topic work in Years 6 and 2 is striking.
- You and your leadership team work hard to track how well pupils are doing in their learning. You look carefully at the progress of different groups of pupils and act swiftly if you spot any underperformance. The school approach to assessment has been changed recently. At present, the assessments in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are not joined up enough and this means that some pupils take too long to adjust to the Year 1 curriculum.
- Governors support the school's leaders well. Their commitment to prioritising the needs of the pupils contributes well to their effectiveness.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

- Leaders make sure that all safeguarding requirements are met. Records are detailed and are maintained to a high standard. Staff are trained appropriately and systems are in place to ensure that update or refresher training is scheduled in advance.
- The safeguarding of the school's most vulnerable pupils is a priority for leaders. These pupils are very well known to the school. All staff are aware of what to do if they are concerned about a pupil's welfare, and the school works effectively alongside other agencies to support both pupils and their families.

### **Inspection findings**

- The school is improving in key areas. Leaders have a very clear understanding of where further improvement is needed and are acting to bring about these changes.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are often well below age-related expectations. The Nursery and Reception classes provide them with a very strong start to school. By the time that they leave the Reception class they have made good progress in

many areas of learning. In particular, the Early Years Foundation Stage encourages a very positive approach to school and to learning. Staff establish very warm and productive relationships with children and understand them well. They build on their strengths to develop pupils' confidence and a 'can-do' attitude. The learning environment is bright, well-organised and motivating. Children move confidently from the indoor classroom to the outdoor learning area, accessing the different activities and working alongside their classmates and staff. They develop important skills of independence and clearly enjoy their time at school.

- Raising pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1 is a priority for the school. The pace of change in Years 1 and 2 has been restricted by staffing changes, but the picture is more settled now and there is evidence of improvements in the quality of pupils' work. In one Year 2 class for example, where a very recent staffing change has occurred, an immediate improvement can be seen in pupils' work, due to the higher expectations that now exist.
- New assessment systems are embedding across the school. There are currently some areas where inconsistencies occur, especially in the transition between the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 where two different assessment systems meet. It is important for leaders in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 to ensure that pupils' good start is sustained.
- Pupils in upper Key Stage 2 and the Year 4 class are making strong progress. Their well-presented work reflects the standards that teachers expect of them and they are proud to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.
- Pupils enjoy a brief period of time each day which is devoted to looking back at their work and making improvements, usually prompted by feedback from their teacher. They take this part of the school day seriously and can explain what they need to do to make further progress.
- The full range of national curriculum subjects is taught in a well-planned framework. This 'topic' work is broad and makes good use of visits, visitors and trips to add context to the work that pupils undertake. This work is exceptionally well done in both Year 6 classes and one of the Year 2 classes. Here, pupils have opportunities to apply their learning in English and mathematics across a range of other subjects and the results are impressive. The standard of work is not equally high in the other year groups.
- Leaders make good use of their time to check on the quality of teaching across the school. They adopt a 'coaching' model for teachers which seeks to identify precisely what their strengths are, as well as those areas which need support. Lessons and pupils' work are monitored regularly. The work of teaching assistants is similarly checked, and a cohesive team approach to getting the very best for pupils is apparent across the staff.
- The school's ethos is very inclusive and all pupils are given opportunities to thrive. Pupils know that their welfare is a priority for the staff. Many expressed confidence in their problems being sorted out swiftly when they reported them to teachers or teaching assistants. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with good-quality support from teachers

and teaching assistants. These pupils make good progress throughout the school.

- The school receives a significant amount of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. The spending of this money is monitored well and any interventions or support plans that are not effective are quickly stopped or amended in order to ensure value for money. This funding is spread over a wide range of different strategies, including two additional teachers who are specifically employed to support this group of pupils. The impact of this funding is variable between year groups and is under ongoing review; it was very successful for Year 6 in 2015 as disadvantaged pupils achieved consistently better than other pupils. In contrast, fewer disadvantaged pupils in Year 1 achieved the expected standard in the phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) screening check last year.
- Governance has improved substantially since the previous inspection, where it was found to be a weakness. Governors are well informed and understand the school's strengths and where it needs to improve further. They work hard to understand assessment data in order that they can make appropriate decisions about spending. Governors are well led and are an important element of the school's leadership team.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the very good quality of topic work currently being produced by pupils in Years 2 and 6 is replicated across other year groups
- the newly introduced assessment systems are more closely linked to ensure smooth transition between year 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 Norfolk County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Moodie  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with the headteacher, senior leaders, governors and spoke to a representative of the local authority to discuss the school's progress since the previous inspection. I also spoke to around 30 pupils in the dining hall about their views on the school. I visited lessons in all classrooms, observed teaching and looked at pupils' work in several subjects. Some of these visits to lessons were with the headteacher. The school's self-evaluation documentation, improvement plans, safeguarding records, attendance data and assessment information were evaluated and discussed.