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Mrs Judith Osler
Executive headteacher
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Cambridgeshire
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Dear Mrs Osler

Short inspection of Fawcett Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 June 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 October 2011.

This school continues to be good.

Along with other school leaders, you have ensured that the school continues to provide a good quality of education and that pupils achieve well. You ensure that pupils' learning and their welfare are at the heart of everything that you do. There have been many challenges to the school since the previous inspection. There has been a significant increase in pupil numbers, following housing developments in the local area, and Fawcett Primary is currently in the process of becoming a two-form entry school. You also had to deal with severe flooding this time last year. Despite these challenges the school continues to be well led. As one parent said on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 'Fawcett Primary has really grown these last few years. The school has many new pupils. All the teachers, staff and existing pupils have dealt incredibly well with the changes. The new pupils are made to feel very welcome, they are well looked after and the existing pupils are kind and welcoming too.'

In 2012 the school became part of a federation with Trumpington Meadows Primary, and you became the executive headteacher of both schools. The two schools now share a governing body and members of the school's leadership team. These arrangements have brought additional capacity to the school and enabled expertise to be shared and developed. There have also been significant changes to the teaching staff over the past year, including four newly qualified teachers who started at the school in September 2015. Your leadership team has ensured that these teachers have received appropriate support. As a result they have settled well into their roles and have made a valuable contribution to the school's development.

At the previous inspection you were asked to raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics and improve attendance to above-average levels. As a result of the actions that have been taken:

- pupils' attendance has improved considerably and is now above the national average
- pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics has improved across the school.

Although there have been improvements to the teaching of writing across the school, this is not yet reflected in standards seen at the end of Year 6. You recognise that further work is required and you have good plans in place to improve teaching and raise achievement in this key area.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective and all statutory requirements are met. The arrangements for ensuring the safer recruitment of staff are robust, and great care is taken to ensure that the school's single central record of these checks is accurate and up to date. The records are detailed and of high quality. The school works effectively with external agencies to ensure that child protection procedures are in place. Any concerns that adults have about pupils are recorded and followed up assiduously. Staff receive regular training and information on safeguarding matters, such as the government's 'Prevent' duty, which focuses on the need to prevent people from being drawn into extremism.

Almost all of the parents who responded to Parent View stated that their children are safe and well looked after while at school. Pupils spoken to during this inspection said that bad behaviour does occur sometimes and that there are also occasional incidents of bullying. However, pupils said that teachers deal with these issues and that they feel safe while in school.

Inspection findings

- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. An increasing number of children start at the school in the early stage of learning English. Good systems are in place to identify the support that is required, and the 'catch-up' programmes that the school uses ensure that language does not remain a barrier to learning for too long. Children quickly learn the school's routines and successfully develop early reading, writing and number skills. They have access to a wide selection of enjoyable activities in an attractive learning environment, both in the classroom and in the outdoor area. In 2015 the percentage of children reaching the expected level was above the national average.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes have regular access to books, and early reading skills, including phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) are taught effectively. As a result, pupils develop into confident readers in key stage 1. In 2015 the percentage

reaching the expected level in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 was above the national average. Across key stage 2, reading continues to be taught well and pupils read widely and often. Attainment in reading at the end of Year 6 in 2015 was significantly above the national average.

- The school's curriculum is well planned and helps to ensure that all pupils study a broad range of subjects in appropriate depth. Teachers' expectations about what pupils can achieve in subjects such as science, history and geography are high, and this was reflected in the quality of work seen in pupils' books. During this inspection part of a science lesson was observed. Pupils, dressed in white coats, were involved in practical experiments aimed at improving their knowledge about blood. They demonstrated an excellent understanding of the functions and properties of blood and were articulate in their responses to the teacher's challenging questions.
- Improvements have been made to the teaching of writing. The work seen in pupils' books, and on display throughout the school, shows that pupils have many opportunities to write, not just in English lessons but also in subjects such as science, geography and history. However, the higher standards seen across the school are not yet reflected in the standard and quality of writing being achieved at the end of Year 6. Senior leaders are aware of this, and have further plans for improvement in this key area.
- The school's provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is highly effective. Regular reviews of the progress pupils make help to identify those who are falling behind with their learning or are in need of additional support in other aspects of their development. The special educational needs coordinator monitors progress carefully, and teaching assistants work well with teachers to support pupils' learning. Where additional support is provided, for example through programmes aimed at developing language, this is tracked and monitored to ensure that it is having the required impact.
- Pupils enjoy the learning opportunities that the school provides outside of the classroom. A number of clubs are available and in Year 6 pupils are given the opportunity to participate in a residential visit. Additional learning opportunities are also provided through the Forest School in the playing field, where pupils learn key practical and social skills.
- Teaching assistants are highly valued at the school. As well as providing effective support for pupils who have special educational needs or disability, they also support teaching and learning effectively in lessons. For example, one teaching assistant was seen skilfully leading a guided writing session, which pupils engaged in with great enthusiasm.
- Middle leaders are increasingly effective in leading developments in their subject areas. They also make regular checks on the work in pupils' books to ensure that the school's policies and procedures are being followed. They provide reports to senior leaders about the work that they see, highlighting strengths and weaknesses. However, currently they focus too much on whether teachers are complying with agreed policies and not enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. This means that strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are not always identified quickly enough.

- The teaching of mathematics has improved and this was reflected in the higher levels of attainment that were achieved at the end of both key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2015. Better progress was also apparent in pupils' books, which showed that pupils are provided with good levels of challenge in mathematics lessons. The school has recently been focusing on encouraging pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to investigate and solve problems with the aim of further improving standards.
- Currently, too few disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress or achieve the higher levels at the end of Year 6. However, recent improvements are beginning to have an impact. A pupil premium 'champion' has been appointed to work across the federation, supporting pupils and coordinating the work of other adults who work in the schools. Records show that the additional support that is now being provided for these pupils is having a positive impact on their progress and attainment.
- Governance is effective. The governing body makes good use of the wide range of skills and experience that individual governors possess. They are often involved in school life and make regular checks on key aspects of the school's work. As a result, governors are knowledgeable about the school and are able to ask challenging questions of school leaders. Governors share the leadership team's high ambitions to improve the school further.

Next steps for the school

In order to ensure that the school continues to improve, leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a higher number of pupils are at or above age-related expectations in writing by the end of Year 6
- improvements continue to be made in the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils
- the checks that subject leaders make on the quality of teaching focus more on pupils' progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, three assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, and the subject leaders for mathematics and English. I also met four governors (including the chair of the governing body) and a

representative of the local authority. I scrutinised a range of documents, policies and assessment information. I made short visits to all classrooms to observe teaching and learning and looked at the work in pupils' books. I spoke with pupils from Year 5 and Year 6 and also considered responses from parents and staff to Ofsted questionnaires.