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Mr Tim Lawes
Headteacher
Catton Grove Primary School
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Dear Mr Lawes

Short inspection of Catton Grove Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 July 2016 with Anne Fisher, Ofsted Inspector, 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 December 2011.

This school continues to be good.

Catton Grove is a school at the heart of its community. Parents enjoy coming into the school and are very keen to support their children's education. This is evident in the high attendance at curriculum sessions, like the regular reading cafés, and at external events, such as the recent Lord Mayor of Norwich's Show, in which pupils took an active and successful part. Most parents speak very highly of the school. As one parent put it: 'Teachers work as a whole team and make sure my children settle quickly and mix well with other children in their class.'

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and wider experiences. This includes visits to other European countries through the British Council's Erasmus project, and taking part in the wide range of after-school clubs. As one teacher commented, 'Our objective is to make sure pupils experience life beyond their home environment.' Pupils are very proud of their school. They readily take responsibility for helping children who have less than they do and speak with great enthusiasm about their successful fundraising for children in Tanzania. 'We started last year. We organised a fete and along with other activities, raised £1500.' Pupils like the fact that teachers expect a lot of them in lessons. They talk knowledgeably about how much their reading, writing and mathematics have improved this year.

You and your senior leaders have rightly taken on board the good advice and support offered by the local authority following the 2015 results. You were disappointed with the key stage 2 outcomes in 2015, because pupils did not make

sufficient progress and did not achieve well enough in reading, writing or mathematics. In particular, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities underachieved. This meant that attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils widened last year.

Assessment information indicates that children get a good start in the early years foundation stage and make good progress, but that this was not maintained through key stages 1 and 2. Pupils were leaving the school with attainment significantly below average, especially in writing. You have turned this around in the last year as a result of the good training for teachers and a much sharper focus from you and the senior leadership team on checking pupils' progress every half term. You have worked hard and successfully acted upon the recommendations from the last inspection.

Pupils' behaviour is consistently good throughout the school day because of your high expectations, teachers' skills in planning interesting lessons, and the excellent work of your inclusion team. Pupils' orderly response to the unexpected fire alarm demonstrated their sensible conduct. Pupils walked outside calmly and lined up as a matter of routine. They stopped chatting and listened when staff spoke to them, and there was a huge cheer when you told them it was not because the Reception class had been cooking again!

Most pupils attend well, but overall attendance figures are below the national figure because a small number of pupils have high levels of absence, some of which is unauthorised. The school has put in place suitable support for individual pupils and families where they struggle to maintain regular attendance. You and the governors take a suitably tough stance on absence when this is appropriate.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils' safety takes top priority at your school. You have created an excellent inclusion team, very ably led by an assistant headteacher who ensures that every possible strategy is put in place to avoid excluding pupils from school. The safeguarding lead is equally determined to get the best possible provision for the most vulnerable pupils.

It is clear from the extremely careful records you keep for all vulnerable pupils that you do not always receive robust support from children's social care. For example, your inclusion and safeguarding leaders have often had to chase up referrals because follow-up responses are not timely.

Safeguarding policies, procedures and processes are fully in place and meet requirements. Staff know what to do and who to go to if they have an issue. Pupils say that they are confident to talk to an adult if they have a concern or feel unsafe in any situation. Pupils value the support they get from the pastoral team, especially when they are finding it hard to work successfully in their classroom. This one-to-one support is particularly effective in avoiding unnecessary exclusion.

Inspection findings

- The 2015 end of key stage 2 results were not good enough. You and senior leaders recognised that immediate action was required to raise standards and close the widening gap in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and all pupils nationally. The local authority were rightly very concerned about pupils' results, and provided effective support for you and the governors through monthly improvement board meetings and a range of additional support. This direct intervention spurred you and the staff into action. One senior leader said, 'The big lesson we have learned as professionals is we must have a real sense of urgency about improving pupil outcomes.' You have confronted weaknesses in teaching and learning and, after a year, have raised standards for all pupils.
- You have strengthened your leadership team over the last year. The deputy headteacher and four assistant headteachers work very effectively with you to evaluate the strengths and weakness in teaching and learning. Their half-termly action plans are sharply focused on improving pupils' achievement. The effect of the actions taken are evident in the accelerated progress made by disadvantaged pupils since the start of the school year in reading, writing and mathematics. This has narrowed the gaps in the standards achieved by disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils, which had widened in 2015.
- Improvement planning is sound, but the sharpness of evaluation and clarity of your senior leaders' action plans are not reflected in the school's self-evaluation or school improvement and development plan (SIDP).
- Teachers are with you all the way and when the local authority intervened, the staff were even more determined to improve their teaching and pupils' outcomes. They have found it useful to observe each other teach, and value the time they have been given to reflect on pupils' learning. They also give their colleagues helpful feedback. They acknowledge that performance management is very challenging, as are the half-termly pupil progress meetings run by you and the assistant headteachers.
- Successful steps have been taken to address the underachievement of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Evidence from assessment information and from pupils' work shows that they have made good progress since the start of the year. However, you are not evaluating the effect of the extra help they receive. In addition, the large amount of paperwork for each pupil lacks precision and does not help you to readily check how well they are progressing.
- Governance has improved since last summer. Governors had the courage and foresight to take a long, hard look at their approach to checking up on the quality of education that the school offers. Governors are honest about their skills and that they needed support to improve further. As part of the improvement board, the local authority commissioned an external review of governance which has helped the governors understand and implement their role. Governors' regular, sharply focused visits enable them to challenge you and senior leaders about pupils' achievement. They recognise there is still work to be done, particularly in checking that the school website meets requirements, and that the large amount of pupil premium

received for pupils eligible for this additional funding is used to best effect. The recent external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding also recommends a more rigorous evaluation of how these funds are used.

- Most of the 26 parents who responded to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents), and the 21 parents who wrote text messages, are pleased with their children's progress and how the school looks after them. One or two parents raised concerns about behaviour and bullying but inspectors found no evidence to support these concerns.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of how they spend the pupil premium funding, checking that every initiative is having a positive influence on pupils' achievement
- self-evaluation reflects the stringent and accurate half-termly evaluations carried out by senior leaders
- school improvement planning is sharply focused on improving pupils' achievement
- plans for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are fit for purpose and enable teachers and senior leaders to evaluate the impact of the extra help they receive rapidly and effectively
- the school website meets requirements.

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. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Julie Winyard
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors visited lessons across the school to observe a range of teaching and learning taking place. Most observations were carried out jointly with assistant headteachers or subject leaders. Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their learning in lessons and their safety in the school. In addition, inspectors spoke with pupils about learning and safety throughout the inspection. Inspectors listened to pupils read from Years 1, 2, 4 and 6. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, subject leaders for pupils with special educational needs, literacy and numeracy, senior leaders responsible for monitoring the work of the school and the lead member of staff for safeguarding. In addition, inspectors held meetings with a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body. Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development and improvement plan, school policies, curriculum planning and evaluated how the

school spends the pupil premium additional funding. Inspectors considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors reviewed pupils' work in lessons and analysed a sample of pupils' books. Inspectors evaluated 26 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and 21 free text messages. Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day.