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Miss Carol Shaw
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Shaw

Short inspection of Pendragon Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 30 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 June 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Along with other leaders, you have maintained a culture of high expectations for pupils, which are regularly reinforced by staff and governors. You share a vision for continuous improvement and are rigorous in the way that you hold staff to account for their performance. Pupils' attitudes to life at Pendragon are accurately captured in the motto that they recently created: 'Respect, Effort, Achieve, Challenge'.

There have been many challenges to the school since the previous inspection. The school is rapidly growing in size due to significant housing developments in the local area, and an increasing number of pupils join the school in the early stage of learning English. There have also been a number of staff changes, with four new teachers, including two newly qualified teachers, starting at the school in September 2015. You have met these challenges well. New staff and new pupils have settled into the school well and the quality of teaching and learning has continued to improve. Two years ago, the governing body took responsibility for managing the pre-school provision. You have used this process to help improve transition into the Reception class.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to raise attainment in writing by providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length, and improving opportunities for pupils to develop and use their writing skills in subjects other than English. You were also asked to improve teaching and learning for the most able.

You have successfully addressed each of these issues. Expectations about what the most able pupils can achieve have been increased and rates of progress have improved, particularly in mathematics. All pupils now have many varied and stimulating opportunities to write in different styles across the curriculum. Effective teaching has helped pupils to develop a wide vocabulary and a good understanding of grammar and punctuation. A focus this year on improving handwriting has had an extremely positive impact, and the quality of presentation seen in books and on wall displays shows that pupils have a real pride in their work.

Safeguarding is effective.

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Regular training has ensured that staff and governors understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose, and that records are detailed and accurate. Systems and procedures are kept under constant review to ensure that best practice is maintained, and the school keeps precise records of the checks that are made on adults before they are appointed at the school. As a result of these actions, pupils say they feel safe while in school and the vast majority of parents agree.

Inspection findings

- There are good systems in place to ensure a smooth transition into the pre-school and Reception classes. Staff from the school visit children at home, or in their Nursery, prior to their starting at the school, and parents contribute to the early assessments that are made of children's skills and abilities. Children make good progress across the early years in all areas of learning because provision meets their needs well. In 2015, the percentage of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year was around the national average. The school's current assessments indicate that it is likely to be higher this year.
- Pupils in the early years and Year 1 develop a good understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters represent). They are given many opportunities to develop their early reading and writing skills. Although the percentage of pupils who passed the phonics check at the end of Year 1 was below the national average last year, this year's results reflect the improvements in teaching and learning in this area. The school's most recent assessments show that the proportion of pupils passing the check, in 2016, is likely to be around the national average.
- Pupils make good progress in reading as they move through the school. Older pupils read widely and often. Those spoken to during this inspection demonstrated a wide knowledge of different authors. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in reading at the end of Year 6 in 2015 was above the national average.

- Significant improvements have been made to the teaching of writing. Pupils are given regular opportunities to write at length, both in English lessons and while studying other subjects. The work seen in pupils' books was of a high standard. The quality of written work is celebrated in displays across the school, in classrooms and corridors. Pupils particularly enjoy being involved in the 'Pendragon Writers' Club' every second Friday, when there is a whole-school focus on extended writing.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed extremely well. Pupils take great pride in their work. They are proud of their own achievements and those of their peers. Pupils develop a good understanding of the key values that underpin British society. The school celebrates the diversity in the community that it serves, and pupils show respect for people of different faiths and cultures.
- Mathematics is taught well. The work seen in books indicated that pupils are provided with a good level of challenge during lessons and are making good progress as a result. Pupils are often given the opportunity to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to investigate and solve problems.
- The school has a detailed and well-planned curriculum which helps pupils to build on their knowledge and skills systematically across a wide range of subjects. For example, in science, pupils learn how to make predictions, conduct experiments and evaluate their findings. In history, older pupils learn about the slave trade and the introduction of the welfare state. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in these subjects, and this is reflected in the quality of work seen in pupils' books.
- The curriculum is enriched by various activities both during the school day and in after-school clubs. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their sporting, artistic and musical talents. Pupils in Year 4 and Year 6 are given the opportunity to participate in residential visits. Pupils also enjoy looking after the school's chickens. Helping to feed them and collect their eggs gives pupils an understanding of animal husbandry. Selling them to parents each Friday helps pupils to develop their business acumen.
- Last year, some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities did not make progress that was as good as others in the school. Regular reviews of pupils' progress are undertaken and additional support is provided where necessary using a range of strategies. However, the assessments that are made of pupils' attainment and progress do not always provide enough detail about what pupils need to do to move on in their learning. This limits the progress that some of these pupils make.
- You have correctly identified that some disadvantaged pupils made slower progress than others last year. You have improved the support that is provided for these pupils, and the work seen in books during this inspection indicates that many are now making better progress. However, you recognise that there is more to be done and have recently commissioned an external review of how effectively you are using the additional funding.
- Governance is effective. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and understand the needs of the community it serves. They share the leadership team's high ambitions to improve the school further. Governors are often involved in school life and make regular checks on key aspects of the school's work. They ensure that they keep up to date with relevant training. For

example, all of those spoken to during this inspection had attended safer recruitment training. By carrying out tasks such as exit interviews, when members of staff leave the school, governors have developed a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are able to ask challenging questions of school leaders.

Next steps for the school

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

- ensure that accurate assessments are made on all pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they receive effective support and make better progress
- further improve the progress made by disadvantaged pupils so that, by the end of Year 6, their attainment matches, more closely, that of other pupils nationally.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cambridge. 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, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and the lead teacher for the early years foundation stage. I also met with five governors (including the chair of the governing body), a representative of the local authority and pupils from Year 5 and Year 6. 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 also considered responses from parents and staff to Ofsted questionnaires.