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Mr Jeff Maidment
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Maidment

Short inspection of North Waltham Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 September 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 July 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You provide vision and inspirational leadership and are well respected by pupils, staff, parents and the local authority. You and your team are ambitious for the pupils in your care and are highly driven to improve the quality of provision at North Waltham. Pupils and parents are rightly proud of the school and all that it achieves.

Although it has recently expanded from five to six classes, North Waltham is still a small school which prides itself on nurturing a close family atmosphere. Pupils are well known as individuals by staff and their peers, and the school takes great care to support the academic and pastoral development of them all. There have been some recent staffing changes; two teachers and two teaching assistants retired last year and they have been replaced by two new teachers and four teaching assistants. In addition, the deputy headteacher role is now shared between two members of staff and the school hosts two School Direct trainee teachers as part of the Andover Alliance. Working closely with governors, you have prepared well for these changes; you embrace the fresh ideas and energy that new staff bring and ensure that they receive effective induction and training programmes.

Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school and use this to identify strengths and areas for development. Your school improvement planning

is detailed, has clear targets and is appropriately focused. Consequently, standards are rising quickly and all groups of pupils are making strong progress.

Pupils are confident, polite and understanding of each other. They are justly proud of their learning and progress, and readily share their ideas with staff, each other and visitors. This pride is also evident in their well-presented written work. The rich curriculum provides opportunities to learn about different faiths and to respect and value different cultures. In addition, pupils and parents identified how much they appreciate the wide range of opportunities that school offers. In particular, they highlighted the wide range of sporting activities and clubs on offer, including swimming and judo, and visits such as the Reception class trip to a local farm, the Year 5/6 residential trip and a science trip to a local college. Pupils also value the opportunities to take responsibility by becoming prefects, acting as sports leaders and being on the school council. Supporting pupils' personal development is clearly a strength of the school.

Leaders have responded well to the areas for improvement identified during the previous inspection. Working in partnership with a variety of other schools, you actively seek examples of new initiatives and teaching approaches, evaluating them and implementing only those approaches which would be most effective in your school. As a result, the quality of teaching and outcomes have improved and staff morale is high.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, there is a culture of vigilance and records are detailed and of high quality. There are clear, well-understood procedures and processes in place to manage safeguarding requirements. All staff have up-to-date training to an appropriate level and so they know what to do should they be worried about a pupil. This includes awareness of radicalisation. Governors are knowledgeable and work closely with senior leaders to ensure that the work to keep pupils safe is given high priority and meets current requirements.

Pupils' attendance is above the national average. You recognise that some groups, including disadvantaged pupils, have had absence rates slightly higher than their classmates in the past and have worked closely with outside agencies and the families to support improvements. Bullying and discrimination are extremely rare. Almost all pupils and parents report that children feel safe and well looked after at North Waltham Primary School and they know who to go to should they have any concerns. As several of the pupils told me during the inspection, 'The best thing about this school is all the friends that you make here.'

Inspection findings

- You give the school strong, purposeful and highly effective leadership. Your vision for improving teaching and learning through focusing upon 'learning behaviours' is shared by the whole staff. Prompts for these behaviours are

displayed prominently in each classroom and staff clearly have a shared drive to develop children's imagination, critical thinking, perseverance and independent learning skills. The impact of this work is evident in the studious atmosphere and high standards achieved across the school.

- The senior leadership team works effectively to support and challenge the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Regular coaching and training has encouraged sharing ideas and resources, and supported staff development. You already have detailed plans in place to support the new staff who joined the school at the beginning of this academic year.
- Leaders and governors have taken effective steps to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The quality of teaching seen during this inspection, historic progress information, the school's evidence about pupils' strong progress and the work in pupils' books all indicate that teaching in the school is securely good. There is compelling evidence of improved levels of challenge for all groups of pupils, including the most able, and leaders are keen to improve standards still further. Reading skills across the school are particularly high, and writing and mathematics skills have significantly improved since the previous inspection.
- Leaders have worked hard to reorganise and improve the quality of provision in early years. As a result, the indoor learning environment offers a well-organised range of stimulating learning zones. Leaders are aware that the outdoor learning areas do not yet offer as rich and stimulating learning opportunities, and plans to rectify this are underway.
- Governors are an enthusiastic and effective team, they know the school well and offer useful support and challenge to you and your senior team. They are reflective and review their work, making changes to increase their impact where necessary. Aware that their roles and responsibilities could be better defined, governors have recently conducted an audit of their skills and engage in regular training from the local authority and other providers.
- In 2016, as yet unvalidated school figures show that the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development by the end of early years was lower than that achieved in previous years, but was still in line with previous national averages. More pupils in Year 1 than in most schools typically achieve the expected standard in the phonics (the sounds that letters represent) check. Historically, the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 were above average, although the proportion of those working at a greater depth has been slightly below national figures. Standards by the end of Year 6 have been in line with national expectations for many years. In 2016 the proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was provisionally much higher than national with achievement in reading being particularly high.
- Senior leaders have been very effective in raising standards across the school. You recognised the need to improve the quality of mathematics teaching and learning, and have done so. The results achieved in the national tests, work in current pupils' books, together with the learning witnessed during the inspection, evidence clearly the strong progress that children are now making across the

school. Older pupils develop a depth of knowledge and understanding in mathematics. In English, they produce regular extended pieces of written work. Staff are ensuring that this written work incorporates what pupils learn in their spelling, punctuation and grammar lessons.

- Teachers have high expectations and use their good subject and assessment knowledge to design stimulating lessons. They focus clearly on intended learning and give pupils precise feedback and guidance, which they use to modify and improve their work. Teachers routinely use high-quality questioning and discussion very effectively to probe and develop pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils clearly enjoy their time in school and are highly motivated to do well.
- Phonics teaching is consistent across key stage 1 and Reception classes so that pupils achieve well. Teachers have strong subject knowledge, high expectations and are skilled in modelling phonics techniques to the pupils. For example, in the Year 2 class, the teacher set a challenging variety of work, enabling pupils to build confidence in sounding and writing a variety of single sounds which are represented by two letters and some made by three letters. Applying these skills, pupils then enthusiastically segmented and then spelled a range of complicated words such as 'chimney'.
- You monitor the progress of all pupils very effectively. The assessment of pupils' learning identifies the work covered and how well this has been understood by the pupils. Leaders and teachers quickly pinpoint any pupils at risk of underachieving and then design and implement bespoke additional support where needed. This has significantly reduced any differences between the achievement of the very small numbers of disadvantaged or vulnerable pupils and others.
- There is particularly effective leadership of provision for the small cohort of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who require intervention to help them catch up. Leaders identify any pupils at risk of underachievement and work closely with teachers to plan and deliver a range of actions to meet individual needs. Parents and pupils are rightly involved in this, shaping support through regular meetings. As a result, this group of pupils is making good progress and developing independence and strategies to help themselves with learning.
- You have improved the level of challenge for the most able pupils by raising standards of literacy and thinking skills across the school. As a result, able pupils in lower key stage 2 can skilfully analyse their own writing and confidently read it out loud, demonstrating how to place emphasis and build tension within their own storytelling. In addition, there are some particularly strong examples of extended writing, such as the particularly emotive poetry written by Year 5 pupils. You agree that, as the curriculum develops, more could be done to challenge the most able pupils in writing and across a wider range of subjects.
- The local authority provides the school with good and effective support. Through facilitating access to English and mathematics networks and forging links with other local primary schools, leaders have focused sharply on improvements to the quality of teaching.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- best practice presently in the school is used to improve teaching even further
- challenge for the most able pupils is securely embedded across the school
- the external learning environment in early years is improved, to provide a richer level of challenge and promote outstanding progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Newberry
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection I looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including safeguarding arrangements, the progress made by pupils during Reception and Year 1, the progress pupils make in mathematics and how effectively teachers meet the needs of groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils.

I met with you, the two deputy headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I visited five classes jointly with yourself and one of the deputy headteachers to look at teaching and learning. I looked at pupils' work in their exercise books, including work done this year and last. I had a meeting with a small group of pupils and spoke to several of them informally at lunchtime. I took into account 43 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as speaking to a number of parents at the beginning of the day. I considered 19 staff and 37 pupil questionnaires. I evaluated a range of documents, including pupils' progress information, and safeguarding policies, procedures and checks.