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Anna Spencer
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Dear Miss Spencer

Short inspection of Central Infant and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 6 October 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 May 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Pupils continue to make good progress. This includes the high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, many of whom start at the school significantly below age-related expectations.

You have created a vibrant, safe and caring environment for pupils at the school. Every wall is covered with pupils' work and colourful, storytelling displays which inspire their imaginations and celebrate their achievements.

You have introduced a 'no excuse culture' at the school to reflect your high aspirations for all pupils. Your high expectations are shared by staff, governors and pupils. Posters everywhere inform pupils: 'The point at which we become stuck is the point at which we start learning.' This whole-school message has helped pupils have the confidence to have a go, even when learning is difficult for them. You have focused on helping pupils to become independent learners; pupils are taught to be resilient, reciprocal, reflective and resourceful. Pupils I spoke with in Year 1 understood these school values and could tell me how they used them to improve their learning in lessons.

Since the last inspection, you have acted on the recommendation from the inspectors and improved the effectiveness of leadership and management. You are

now well supported by two deputies. You have also appointed two middle leaders who have responsibility for English and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's areas for development. Your strengthened leadership team has worked with you to produce an appropriate action plan to support school improvements. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and more staff are involved in whole-school planning. As a result, staff now feel more accountable and work together for the school's shared goals.

Last year the local authority commissioned an external review of governance and a new chair of governors was appointed who has experience as a national lead in governance. The governing body now provides more appropriate support and challenge to the school. It holds you more closely to account for how you use government funding to ensure that pupils make good progress.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. For example, your successful collaboration with other schools has been key to your continued success in improving the quality of teaching and learning at the school. As well as working with a family of local schools, you also have close links with the local junior school and Transform, a local teaching alliance. You work with this group to moderate teachers' assessments of pupils' work. This has enabled you to be confident that you know exactly what level each pupil is working at and therefore can put in place timely support for any pupil who is falling behind. By the end of Year 2, all pupils make good progress. You have rightly identified that, while pupils' progress is good, their attainment is not yet meeting national expectations, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Your action plan continues to ensure that you focus on improving attainment for all pupils.

You have revised your mathematics curriculum to provide more well-planned and meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills. Together we saw pupils working to solve mathematical problems. Teachers had planned activities and resources that were well matched to pupils' different abilities and helped pupils to deepen their understanding. Pupils enjoyed working together to discuss different methods to tackle problems and decide which method was the best one to use. The most able pupils thrived on the challenge of inventing their own number problems and then testing them out on each other.

You have ensured that pupils have a broad and balanced curriculum, which develops their social, moral, spiritual and cultural skills and prepares them well for junior school.

Pupils' attendance, although improving, has been below the national average for the past few years. This is mainly because some pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, are persistently absent from school. You have taken action to improve this and have recently appointed an attendance officer, who has taken a determined approach to improving attendance. You provide additional support to parents and pupils, if needed, to improve their attendance. For example, you fund transport and places for pupils at the school breakfast club. You have placed a large attendance

display in main reception and prizes and awards are given for good rates of attendance. Pupils know how important good attendance is for their learning. You tell me that the class attendance award gets the loudest cheer in assembly every week. Although attendance figures are still not at national expectations, the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school has reduced significantly and punctuality in the mornings has improved.

Safeguarding is effective.

You are the designated safeguarding leader and you are supported by three other members of staff who are also fully trained as safeguarding officers. You rightly make the safety of pupils your highest priority. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of a high quality.

You have checked that staff, including midday supervisors, have read and understood the very latest government guidance. All staff know what to do if they have any concerns. You showed me some examples of this in practice where staff had acted swiftly and followed school procedures appropriately. You deal with all concerns promptly and are rigorous in following up any referrals to external agencies. You have also ensured that appropriate staff are trained in paediatric first aid and there are appropriate pupil risk assessments in place for trips.

Pupils said that they felt safe at the school. You have provided opportunities for them to learn about how to stay safe online and from strangers. Pupils told me how much they enjoy the regular visits you have arranged from the police community support officer. You have explained, in language that pupils can understand, potential dangers and how pupils can keep themselves safe. One boy told me, 'You must never tell anyone anything about yourself online. It could be someone you don't know.'

Inspection findings

- You have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You recognise that further improvements are needed in relation to pupils' attainment, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, bringing writing skills in line with reading and mathematics skills and reducing persistent absenteeism, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- You have improved communication with parents through the use of social media. You provide a series of workshops to help support parents with their pupils' learning and you invite parents into assemblies and informally for coffee mornings. They have welcomed this.
- You provide very good support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders ensure that each pupil has an individual plan to support their learning and you involve parents in this too. You are passionate about continuing to provide an inclusive school.
- Staff run nurture groups for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to help support their emotional

needs. The school has won a national award for its work in this area. Pupils' attainment has improved as a result of attending these groups.

- During my visit, I observed a group of pupils thoroughly enjoying their learning outside, digging and making camps, as part of your work as a 'Forest School'. This has proven to be highly successful in engaging pupils in their learning, developing their confidence and helping them to make good progress.
- The majority of children who start in Reception have skills which are typically below age expectations. You have provided staff with training to support pupils with their early speech and language development. These pupils make good progress in the early years.
- You have a consistent approach to teaching pupils phonics. I heard pupils reading and using the techniques which the school has taught them, to sound out difficult or unfamiliar words successfully.
- You carefully track and monitor pupils' progress, including key groups such as disadvantaged pupils, the most able pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You set ambitious targets for pupils to reflect your high expectations for all. You have identified in your school improvement plan that you want more of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, to reach the higher standards. Regular pupil progress meetings with leaders and teachers identify any pupils who are not on track to make good progress. You then put in place individual learning plans and additional support for these pupils. You make sure that this support is regularly reviewed so that any interventions which are not enabling pupils to catch up are changed.
- Pupils say that they enjoy reading; most said that they read every day both at home and at school and they were excited to tell me about their favourite books. You invited pupils to design the school library to encourage their love of reading. They choose the theme 'Dinosaurland' and have successfully created a lively and engaging environment in which to discover new books. Parents praised the school's support of their children's reading.
- Lots of parents explained that the school had helped their children's confidence grow and as a result improved their learning. Many of them, using the Ofsted free-text service during the inspection, praised the teachers at the school. One parent said, 'Staff are approachable, respectful, caring and passionate about their jobs.' Pupils agreed that, 'teachers are the best'.
- You give a high priority to the professional development of teachers. Through your links with a local teaching alliance, staff have access to a wide range of training which enables them to keep a continued focus on delivering high-quality teaching and learning at the school. A number of staff, including yourself, also work as subject specialists and support other schools. This helps you to share and learn about good practice.
- Pupils' books, including those of disadvantaged pupils, demonstrate the good progress which they make at the school. All pupils regularly respond to teachers' feedback in books. This helps them to understand why they make mistakes and what to do to improve.
- Pupils' attainment in writing is slightly lower than in reading and

mathematics. You have made writing a whole-school focus for improvement.

- Pupils' artwork is proudly displayed around the school and is used as a stimulus for learning and writing. For example, one display showed pupils' paintings in the style of Lowry. Another display based around the poem 'Magic Box', was used for pupils to make their own boxes and then write their own poems. One Year 1 pupil wrote, 'a waddle of a happy penguins'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' attainment, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, continues to improve
- pupils' writing skills improve to be in line with reading and mathematics
- overall attendance is improved by reducing persistent absenteeism, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Sally Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with parents at the start of the day and met with you. I spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority and from the governing body. I listened to pupils read and spoke with a group of pupils about their school experience. You and I visited all classes and examined pupils' workbooks. In addition, I scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the single central register (the school's record of safeguarding checks on staff). I evaluated the school's documentation in relation to pupils' performance, improvement planning, attendance, governing body meetings and monitoring records. I took account of 21 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 21 responses to the Ofsted free-text service. There were no responses from staff or pupils to Ofsted's online surveys.

This short inspection focused on:

- whether leaders had improved the effectiveness of leadership and management to drive school improvements
- how leaders had continued to improve the quality of teaching and learning to raise attainment and quicken pupils' progress

- how leaders are tracking and monitoring key groups of pupils to ensure that they all make good progress
- whether overall attendance was improving and rates of persistent absence were declining, particularly for disadvantaged pupils
- whether safeguarding was still effective across the school and pupils were safe.