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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Fiona Thorpe and Mrs Claire Pickard
Co-headteachers
Fulbourn Primary School
School Lane
Fulbourn
Cambridge
Cambridgeshire
CB21 5BH

Dear Mrs Thorpe and Mrs Pickard

Short inspection of Fulbourn Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 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 November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Both of you provide inspirational leadership that motivates staff and ensures that the school keeps on moving forward and improving further. You are well supported by the two assistant headteachers, staff and governors who all share your high expectations and ambition for the school and its pupils. Staff's enthusiastic commitment to sharing good practice is securing better teaching and improving pupils' achievement. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the nurturing and calm atmosphere in the school through their positive behaviour and self-motivation. Everyone works together successfully to live out the school's core values of 'courage, compassion, curiosity and creativity' ('The 4Cs'). This shared vision fully underpins and informs the culture and ethos of the school.

You, alongside the governors, take care to recruit teachers with the right mind-set and attitude to work at Fulbourn. Your rigorous recruitment process means that you employ staff who believe that children can achieve highly, no matter what their ability or need. You have ensured that the staff team has an astute awareness of those pupils who have additional challenges to achieving well. Consequently, the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils, is resulting in improved progress for these pupils from their various starting points.

You are rigorous in your approach to holding teachers to account for the progress that pupils make. Effective performance management arrangements are based on precise, clear targets linked to pupils' achievement. You outline your high expectations of staff in the school's 'teacher expectation guide' document that is reviewed regularly and shared with teachers. There is a consistent approach to planning and expectations of the classroom environment. Teachers know what they need to do, and are well supported to improve and develop their teaching.

Pupils achieve well at key stages 1 and 2. During the three years up until 2015, attainment had been at, or above, the national average for reading, writing and mathematics. The 2016 unchecked results demonstrate that under the new accountability system, pupils achieved well. This confirms that pupils are being well prepared for the next stages of their education.

Through your accurate evaluation of the school's work, you correctly identify the areas for development and take effective actions to secure improvement. The findings from this inspection were of no surprise to you. The areas for development that we discussed, you had already identified to improve during this academic year. You have successfully dealt with the areas for improvement that were identified at the previous inspection. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved further.

You provide pupils with many opportunities through your chosen balanced and creative curriculum to develop their knowledge and understanding about various cultures and the diverse world in which they live. One example is through your 'Citizenship Day', which is a well-planned opportunity where all pupils share their learning about various religions, festivals, ways of life and different beliefs. Pupils also have contributed towards fund-raising activities that respond to worldwide events, for example earthquake appeals and Water Aid, and for BBC Children in Need.

Safeguarding is effective.

All adults make a strong contribution to the effective culture of safeguarding. You have made sure that the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding adhere to the most recent statutory guidance. The school has rigorous procedures for checking the suitability of staff, external agency workers, and volunteers working with children. Staff are vigilant in keeping pupils safe, including from the risks posed by exploitation, radicalisation and extremism. This is the case, because all staff have received relevant training in safeguarding and child protection. Detailed records show that leaders and staff take effective action to address any concerns relating to the safety or welfare of pupils, including ensuring that the school site is secure and safe at all times.

You have a very shrewd overview of safeguarding at the school. Effective quality-assurance procedures mean that all aspects of safeguarding are pursued rigorously. In addition, you undertake an annual audit of all your child protection paperwork to ensure that it is fit for purpose and efficient. Consequently, pupils are very well

looked after. Any risk to their welfare is successfully minimised so they are kept safe.

Pupils access a curriculum that teaches them how to stay safe, including when using the internet, and also from various forms of bullying. Bullying is extremely rare and if any incidents occur, pupils are confident that any member of staff will respond and deal with it swiftly and effectively. Pupils were unanimous about feeling safe and secure in school, and said that it was, 'because adults put us first in everything they think and do'. The school has strategies in place to encourage pupils to share their worries and concerns. Pupils explain how they use the 'bubble-time pegs', or the 'talk-time books' to alert their teacher to the fact that they want to talk to them privately. All parents who shared their views said that their child was happy in school because they feel safe and well cared for.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors, through their accurate evaluation, know precisely which areas of the school's work need to improve further. In particular, even though there has been an improvement since the 2015 results, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, particularly in mathematics, is not as good as it could be. However, since the last set of results, you have already identified that the difference between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and that of others nationally is not diminishing quickly enough. Through your effective actions you are ensuring that appropriate support is provided to enable them to catch up rapidly.
- A real strength of your leadership is that you place great importance on developing the leadership skills of teachers. Curriculum leaders are knowledgeable about their subjects and are confident in providing guidance and support to their colleagues. These leaders appreciate the training they have received, which has made them more effective in their roles. As a result, teaching is securing consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governors are well informed about the school's strengths and areas for improvement because of the detail and rigour in the information you provide to them. As a result, governors are confidently holding leaders to account and providing effective challenge. Governors reflect upon the difference they make and are knowledgeable about how they can develop further. They make sure that they offer the best support they can to help the school in the next steps of its improvement journey.
- Teachers have a good understanding of what pupils know, can do and understand. Teachers plan activities that effectively take into account the differing needs of pupils, including those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the work set typically helps different pupils to improve their knowledge and skills. Staff are keen to do their very best for the pupils. They use every opportunity to improve pupils' reading and mathematical skills, particularly so for the disadvantaged pupils, as they know that these are areas for improvement in the school.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. The special educational needs coordinator works strategically around the concepts of 'assess, plan, do, review'. She works closely with teachers and the learning mentor to identify where progress for these pupils is not as good as it should be. She then ensures that early intervention and longer term support programmes are swiftly put in place.
- Leaders and teachers evaluate their work with disadvantaged pupils by considering the school's big question, 'how does it feel to be a vulnerable child in lessons?'. As a result of your detailed evaluation of the provision in place, disadvantaged pupils receive individualised support that is planned specifically to meet their assessed need. Current rigorous school assessment information demonstrates that disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving quickly, and you predict that at the end of this academic year, results will show an improvement in their attainment.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are challenged well in their lessons to master new subject knowledge and apply new skills rapidly. In 2016, all of the most able pupils (including the most able disadvantaged pupils) achieved the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's current information and inspection evidence indicate that current pupils are on a similar path to success.
- Children join the Reception class with skills that are either similar to, or sometimes lower than, those typically expected for children of their age, particularly in speech and language. Children make good progress from their starting points because the enthusiastic early years leader works hard to plan and provide interesting experiences for all children, primarily based upon following their own interests. The early focus on developing speaking and listening means that children learn communication and language skills at a faster rate. This prepares them well for Year 1 because the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of their Reception Year has increased year on year over the last three years and is currently above the national average. The early years team provides very well for your mixed class of Reception Year children and Year 1 pupils. These leaders ensure that children and pupils have access to a breadth of curriculum opportunities that are matched well to their needs. As a result of this good work, children and pupils of all abilities are able to make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Pupils, including the least- and most able readers, read to me with confidence and also with a positive attitude about 'having a go' even if they found words tricky. Those pupils who find reading more challenging demonstrated their use of a range of approaches when faced with unfamiliar words. They said that they 'sound the words out', 'ask an adult' or 'have a guess, thinking about what the rest of the words are around it'. You are aware of the decline in the proportion of pupils who met the standard in the phonics screening check in 2016, and have already placed this as a priority to work on this year. The leader of English is already monitoring the phonics being taught and ensuring that the assessment of reading is more consistently used. As a result, current school assessment information shows that any gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge are being picked up swiftly to ensure that the rate of progress in phonics and reading is better.

- You have worked effectively to improve the curriculum since the previous inspection. Pupils access fun and interesting topics that encourage them to develop and apply their basic skills of mathematics, writing and reading. Moreover, you have worked hard to embed opportunities for pupils to develop a thorough understanding of what it is to be a good citizen in modern Britain.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils say that this is because everyone has been taught how to behave well, and also that everyone is very clear about the behaviour system that the school uses. Pupils independently evaluate the difference that the behaviour system makes. They think it works and is clear, particularly for younger pupils to follow. Pupils understand having 'island time', and the consequences of being in 'stormy sea' and being 'lost at sea'. However, older pupils have concluded that when you are in Year 6, you need something else that 'prepares you for secondary school when you know you will have detention'.
- Pupils welcome the opportunities the school offers to take on roles and responsibilities, for example as 'peer mediators', 'sports leaders' or 'citizens'. Year 6 pupils also talked proudly about the work they carry out with the new Reception Year children to help them settle into school. They demonstrate a mature empathy of how the children will feel starting school for the first time and related it to how they will feel next year when they go to secondary school. One pupil said, 'I know I will feel the same as they do now when I go to my secondary school. I hope someone does the same for me so I settle quickly.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that they:

- continue to review and develop monitoring and support systems so that disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress from their various starting points, especially in mathematics
- use the effective leadership already in place to continue to develop teaching so that even more pupils achieve well across the curriculum, most notably in the phonics test at the end of Year 1, and in reading.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracy Fielding
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I reviewed a number of key lines of enquiry as part of this inspection. These included safeguarding, and the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils in mathematics. I also looked at the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection.

I met with you both, the two assistant headteachers who lead assessment and provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also met with the improvement adviser from the local authority. We visited all of the classes during the day to observe the quality of teaching and learning and look at pupils' books. I also took account of 65 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and looked at a recent school survey of parent, staff and pupil views. I met with a group of pupils and heard some pupils read. I looked at a range of the school's documentation, including information about safeguarding checks, policies and procedures and pupils' achievement and attendance.