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Mrs Catherine McNulty
Headteacher
Northwood Primary School
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Dear Mrs McNulty

Short inspection of Northwood 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 October 2011.

This school continues to be good.

Despite significant leadership changes, the school continues to improve. You, the staff and governors are passionate about ensuring that every child achieves their best.

Since the last inspection, leaders have tackled the areas for improvement effectively. As a result, over the past few years standards at the end of all key stages have improved considerably in literacy and numeracy, particularly for White British boys. You and your leadership team have taken steps to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently strong, using support from the local authority effectively and focused professional development for all staff.

You and your leadership team ensure that teachers have a clear understanding of what they need to do next to improve pupils' knowledge and skills. Work in pupils' books shows that teachers follow the school's marking policy. They provide feedback that helps pupils improve their work. Pupils say that they find this useful to help them to understand where they have gone wrong and what to do next.

Strong leadership of the early years provision has led to a well-planned curriculum which allows children to settle quickly when they arrive at the school. The outdoor areas have been improved to allow seamless learning opportunities between indoors and outdoors. Children are friendly, confident and keen to talk about what they are doing and learning.

Pupils consider bullying to be rare and it is dealt with quickly and fairly by staff if it does arise. Pupils take care of one another and feel confident they have someone to turn to if they have any worries. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and behave well during lessons, in assembly and at playtimes.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Meticulous records are kept and procedures are followed by all staff. Pupils are taught how to keep safe online and have a good understanding of cyber bullying issues. Staff have been well trained to ensure they are clear about their duties with regard to radicalisation and extremism. The school site is safe, secure and inviting. Pupils are well supervised at breaktimes.

Inspection findings

- Attendance is monitored rigorously. The attendance officer and education welfare officer are effective in supporting leaders to do this. Where necessary they carry out home visits to ensure that pupils are safe and to resolve any issues so that they attend more regularly. These actions result in improved attendance rates for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. The proportion who are persistently absent from school is steadily reducing and is below the national average.
- The inclusive nature of the school means that pupils' self-confidence is developed well. As a result, pupils thrive. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. Teachers ensure that pupils are partners in their learning and are motivated to improve their own work. Pupils were proud to show me examples in their books of where their work has improved and could explain to me why it was better.
- Leaders have focused on improving pupil's writing and this is evident in the progress seen in their literacy books. Opportunities to improve their basic skills in their writing across all subjects are sometimes lacking.
- You have implemented a new assessment system. Teachers and teaching assistants use this well and apply it consistently. Staff use information about pupils' progress to plan the next steps in learning. There is a clear focus on the progress of individual pupils and both teachers and pupils know what pupils need to do to improve. However, there is still a difference between the progress made by the most able disadvantaged pupils and other most-able pupils nationally.
- The work of the pupil ambassadors on developing respect for each other is supported by your work on fundamental British values. Pupils have ample opportunities to explore a wide range of cultures and beliefs, as well as to discover what British values mean in the modern world. One pupil said, 'I am proud to be British but I would also be proud to be part of any other nation as long as I have a home, feel safe and am respected.'

- The governors are a knowledgeable and dedicated group who know the school's context well. They receive useful information about the school and use it to hold you and other senior leaders to account. They check that the school continues to improve quickly.
- Parents are supportive of the school and are confident that their children are happy, enjoy their learning and make progress.
- The local authority has provided useful challenge and support for leaders, helping them to determine key priorities and scrutinise the impact of their work.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the pupil premium funding is used to continue to diminish the difference in outcomes between the most able disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally
- the curriculum provides more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing across a range of subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Danvir Visvanathan
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector agreed to prioritise the following areas with the school at the start of the inspection:

- the provision for the most able disadvantaged pupils across the school
- the work of leaders in securing improved attendance levels at the school.

The inspector carried out the following activities to explore these areas during the inspection:

- a scrutiny of the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection, including the school's safeguarding policy and other policies related to behaviour

- meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders, and two members of the governing body, and a telephone discussion with an adviser from the local authority
- a review of the school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plans
- observations of learning in lessons across the school and of pupils' behaviour and safety in a range of situations, including in assemblies and at break and lunchtime
- conversations with a group of pupil ambassadors and with other pupils in lessons, on the playground and in the dining hall
- listening to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read and looking at a range of pupils' work in books.