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Sarah Ghattaora
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Dear Mrs Ghattaora

Short inspection of Standhill Infants' School

Following my visit to the school on 21 February 2017, 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since that inspection there have been a number of staff and governor changes, but these have stabilised. The parents I spoke with and those parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were almost unanimous in their praise of the improvements you have brought to the school. Parents clearly hold leaders, teachers and indeed all staff in high regard. One parent commented that 'children are well behaved, respectful and so eager to learn'. One parent was keen to inform the inspector of the lengths that teachers had gone to in order to meet the individual needs of her children and the very real difference that this had made. Finally, one parent spoke for many when they commented that 'My child is extremely motivated to learn because of the innovative and exciting approaches taken by teachers within lessons.'

The pupils told the inspector that they enjoyed attending school. As soon as they arrive, pupils are welcomed by their teachers and teaching assistants. They enter school in a calm manner and are soon ready to settle to their learning. Pupils' achievements are celebrated and care is taken to display their work for others to appreciate. A productive atmosphere pervades and pupils respond positively to this. Pupils said that they enjoyed their lessons and appreciated the many awards they received when they displayed good behaviour, worked hard or produced high-quality work.

Following the last inspection, leaders were asked to iron out the few remaining inconsistencies in pupils' progress by making sure that teachers always set tasks at the right level for pupils in all parts of lessons. You joined the school in September 2015 and immediately implemented a new curriculum for all pupils. You had identified that the curriculum had previously allowed insufficient opportunities for pupils to achieve as they should, particularly at key stage 1. Evidence from the most recent information on pupils' progress and within pupils' workbooks suggests that the newly implemented curriculum is having a positive impact. Pupils are working at levels appropriate to their starting points. A greater proportion are predicted to achieve age-related expectations within reading, writing and mathematics in 2017. Additionally, more pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are on track to achieve at a greater depth.

The previous inspection report identified that pupils should produce the same high-quality writing in other subjects as they do in their literacy lessons. As we examined pupils' workbooks together, it was clear that pupils produce extended pieces of writing across the subjects that they study, including in history and science. It was also clear that pupils are applying punctuation carefully, can spell age-appropriate words and use these words correctly in their writing. However, you and I agreed that some of the templates used by teachers in order to encourage pupils' writing could have the opposite effect for some pupils and restrict the writing they produce. You are keen to encourage the pupils' thirst to write. You are also keen to ensure that pupils have the skills they need to write for a range of purposes and for a range of audiences. To this end, creative opportunities take place so that pupils gain first-hand experiences that then encourage them to write. One such example is the 'Make me Famous' project. Pupils in key stage 1 worked with specialists external to the school in order to produce a silent movie. Pupils said that they 'loved' this experience. Encouraging pupils' writing remains a priority for the school.

A small number of disadvantaged pupils attend the school. Because of the low number of pupils, the interpretation of published information about the achievement of this pupil group can be complex. It is clear that a greater proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieve a good level of development, achieve the expected standard in phonics and go on to reach age-related expectations at the end of key stage 1. However, you are aware that further work is required to ensure that disadvantaged pupils continue to achieve as their starting points suggest and that even more of the most able disadvantaged pupils achieve at a greater depth.

Senior leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's performance and the actions required to improve the school further. While these plans have enabled the school to improve rapidly since your arrival, they do not offer a sharp enough focus to enable governors to hold leaders fully to account for their roles and responsibilities in improving the school, for example when monitoring the impact of the pupil premium strategy. You and I agreed that at times governors receive too much information to be helpful.

Safeguarding is effective.

- Leaders and governors have ensured a positive culture that promotes pupils' safeguarding and welfare. The safeguarding governor provides good support and regularly reviews and reports on safeguarding matters. The recruitment of staff to the school is efficient and the business manager is diligent in her management of all records relating to this.
- All staff know pupils and their families well. Communication between home and school is good and parents said that they appreciate this. Leaders and teachers are tenacious. Much individualised work takes place between home and school to help address the challenges that some pupils experience. Records are thorough and stored appropriately. All staff and governors receive the necessary training. An up-to-date safeguarding policy is in place.
- Pupils told the inspector that they felt safe within their school. They said that there were many people that they could approach if they had a problem or a concern. They also said that they took seriously their responsibility of looking after each other and treating everyone with care and respect. It was particularly impressive to listen to a group of Year 2 pupils discuss their recent learning about equality. These pupils spoke eloquently about different family types, and about the importance of treating all people fairly no matter what their individual circumstances.

Inspection findings

- You believe that high expectations for the achievement of all pupils are critical. You have ensured that the information about pupils' progress is detailed and accurate. The targets set for individual pupils show ambition and the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils is regularly checked. Your records and the work in pupils' books show that pupils are making good progress this year.
- The systems in place to manage teachers' performance are rigorous. Teaching staff receive high-quality professional development including the opportunity to work with partner schools. One particularly successful outcome of this partnership working is the improved accuracy of assessment at key stage 1.
- You recognise that a small number of disadvantaged pupils fail to make the progress that their starting points suggest. A pupil premium strategy is in place. We agreed that this planning requires further refinement so that governors can hold you more effectively to account for guaranteeing that the pupil premium makes the required difference.
- In previous years the levels of pupils' absence have been inconsistent. In this small school, a high number of extended absences from very few pupils can dramatically impact on the attendance figures. You have implemented strategies to make sure that pupils regularly come to school. 'Fruity Fridays' are a real success and attendance for all pupils is improving. You recognise that pupils' attendance remains an area of focus.
- Pupils are writing independently and are appropriately applying their learning about spelling and punctuation. They are producing high-quality writing in a

range of curriculum areas. You are correct to ensure that all pupils receive a variety of first-hand experiences in order to develop further their thirst to write.

- In this, your first headship, your leadership has made a positive difference. Currently you are not involved in any headteacher mentoring scheme or developmental leadership programme. Both you and your chair of governors are committed to address this and will seek the support of the local authority in order to do so.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the pupil premium strategy is effective in addressing the barriers to learning for those disadvantaged pupils who underachieve, including the most able disadvantaged pupils
- the proportion of pupils attending school consistently meets or exceeds national levels
- pupils throughout school gain many first-hand and creative opportunities in order to develop their writing skills further.

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

Yours sincerely

Jayne Ashman
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we met, discussed and then agreed the lines of enquiry. I met with all staff during the morning briefing meeting. I spoke with six parents at the start of the school day and considered the views of a further 21 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I viewed a range of documents including an evaluation of the school's performance, information regarding pupils' achievement and attendance and a number of school policies. I reviewed the pupils' safeguarding and welfare arrangements and documentation. Together, you and I reviewed a sample of the work of Year 2 pupils. I met formally with a group of Year 2 pupils. I met with the chair of the governing body and four members of the governing body.