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Mr A Rossington
Arno Vale Junior School
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Dear Mr Rossington

Short inspection of Arno Vale Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 23 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team, including governors, has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. High expectations are seen throughout the school and all members of the school community strive for excellence. Relationships are strong and pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. Consequently, the school has a calm and purposeful atmosphere where tolerance and respect for others flourish.

You have built a cohesive team that is committed to doing the best they can for the pupils and each other. Staff know that each individual contributes in their own way to the success of the team and, as a result, everyone is valued for the work they do. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school; many of the positive responses from the online parent questionnaire praise the staff for being approachable and supportive, with a willingness to 'go that extra mile to make the school a happy and safe community'.

Pupils have many opportunities to extend their learning beyond the curriculum, such as learning to play musical instruments or attending forest school. Pupils are proud of their sporting achievements, most recently celebrating their success in the county indoor athletics competition.

You provide high-quality training and professional development for staff. This ensures a high degree of consistency throughout the school and has contributed to the recent improvement in mathematics throughout the school.

You rightly identified the need to raise standards in mathematics and you have made changes to the school timetable so that pupils now have more opportunities to work at greater depth in mathematics, to develop their reasoning skills and confidently apply their knowledge in different contexts.

The previous inspection recommended that pupils should have the opportunity to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Pupils' work shows that they frequently use their basic skills in different subjects and that written work is of a similar standard to that seen in English and mathematics books. However, books are not as well presented as they could be and this detracts from the quality of the work.

There is still a need to ensure that all pupils make good progress and achieve the standards of which they are capable. In particular, a few pupils who enter the school in the middle prior attainment group do not achieve the standards expected of them at the end of key stage 2.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. There are clear procedures for raising concerns and these are followed up thoroughly. Staff receive regular training to make sure that they are up to date with the most recent guidance. There are also online training opportunities for both staff and governors.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and say that it is a safe and happy place, and that bullying is rare. Pupils have confidence in adults to resolve any problems. Staff know the pupils well and are vigilant in ensuring their well-being; they respond quickly to any minor concerns so they do not escalate. As a result there are very few recorded incidents of poor behaviour.

Attendance is above the national average and persistent absence is rare. Any absences are followed up rigorously.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of good quality. You and a member of the governing body monitor documentation regularly to ensure that it meets all requirements.

Inspection findings

- Over time, standards in the school are high, often significantly better than other schools nationally. Pupils start school with skills and knowledge that are, on average, higher than is typical for their age. You strive to ensure that pupils make good progress and achieve well at the end of key stage 2. You have clear priorities for improvement and have planned actions to ensure that standards remain high. You regularly monitor the learning in all classes, checking that teaching is of a good quality and that pupils are making progress. You use assessment information effectively and take swift action if progress falters.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support via the pupil premium grant is much

smaller than the national average. The funding is spent effectively to support these pupils, providing extra help on an individual basis. Where these pupils do not have special educational needs and/or disabilities, they often achieve better than non-disadvantaged pupils.

- Mathematics teaching is effective and the recently introduced 'enrichment time' provides additional opportunities for pupils to explore mathematical ideas more fully. This is helping them to develop their reasoning skills. For example, some Year 6 pupils explained to me how they were testing out a hypothesis for using number patterns to predict answers to calculations. Assessment information and work in books show that pupils are making good progress; attainment at the end of Year 6 is expected to be better than last year.
- There is a strong reading culture in the school and pupils read confidently and with good understanding. Pupils say they like the different activities in the daily reading sessions and enjoy discussing the class novel. They read for enjoyment, but are also well aware of the importance of reading as a skill for life.
- Pupils are enthusiastic writers and their books show they are developing a range of skills that enable them to write for different purposes and audiences. For example, there was a buzz of excitement in Year 4 classes where pupils were using their skills of persuasion to write adverts. Pupils have personal targets to improve their writing and are able to use checklists to evaluate their own work. While the work in books is of a good standard, the quality of handwriting is not consistent and not all work is well presented.
- Pupils' books show that they make good progress over time. The most able pupils are already achieving the standards expected for their age and are working at greater depth. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and are making good progress towards their personal targets. Pupils in the middle-attaining groups do not always make good progress; a few do not achieve the expected standards for their age at the end of key stage 2.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- rates of progress continue to improve, particularly for pupils in the middle-attaining groups, to ensure that they reach the standards expected of them
- pupils improve their handwriting and set out their work neatly so that the presentation of their work is of a high quality.

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

Jane Salt
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I carried out a learning walk with you, visiting all classes. I reviewed pupils' books to consider the standard of work and the progress being made. I talked to groups of pupils at different times of the day and listened to some pupils read.

I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher and also met with some members of staff to discuss the school's work. I also met with members of the governing body and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.

I reviewed a range of the school's documentation including policies, assessment information and your school improvement plan. I took into account 56 responses on Parent View, the online parent questionnaire, and spoke to some parents informally during the inspection. Two pupils and 19 members of staff responded to Ofsted's online questionnaires.