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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Barbara Kent
Headteacher
Scraptoft Valley Primary School
New Romney Crescent
Netherhall Estate
Leicester
Leicestershire
LE5 1NG

Dear Barbara Kent

Short inspection of Scraptoft Valley Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 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. Although the school has experienced some significant changes in staffing, including the unplanned absence of some senior leaders, you have ensured that staff have maintained a strong commitment to doing the best for the pupils. You have successfully established a culture where everyone works together and contributes well to creating a caring environment. These are very strong features of the school.

You and your staff have established positive relationships throughout the school. As a result, pupils learn quickly how to behave well. Behaviour is consistently good in lessons and at break and lunchtimes. The pupils I spoke with appreciate the well-organised activities at lunchtime and say they feel happy and safe.

You have rightly made attendance a priority for improvement and are implementing a range of strategies to ensure that overall attendance is at least in line with the national average. Holidays taken during the school term are having a negative effect on the school's attendance, especially for some disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils appreciate the very good range of additional sporting activities that you have made available and the wide range of clubs that help them to develop their interests further. The provision you have put in place, before and after school, helps pupils with their learning.

Pupils make good progress from their lower than average starting points. Children settle well into the Nursery class and Reception class. They quickly understand the expectations you have for their behaviour and learn to work and play with each other happily throughout the day.

The previous inspection identified the need for the school to improve pupils' attainment in English in key stage 2. Work in pupils' books, and their outcomes in national assessments, show that the school has responded successfully to this area for improvement. Pupils build upon the skills they learn in early years and key stage 1, in both reading and writing. Until recently, disadvantaged pupils have not made sufficiently rapid progress in reading and writing in order to catch up with other pupils. Sustaining these recent improvements in their progress is a priority for the school.

School leaders have given attention to improving the teaching of mathematics since the previous inspection. Staff have received additional training and support. They have a high level of confidence and skills in teaching this subject. Pupils enjoy mathematics and are developing their skills and abilities well across the different year groups.

Relatively few parents completed the online survey, Parent View. Those who made comments explained that school staff had gone out of their way to be welcoming and supportive for their child. The staff who completed their survey confirmed that they are proud to work at the school and appreciate the strong but supportive leadership you provide. They also welcome the strong sense of teamwork that you and other senior leaders have created.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Checks made to ensure the suitability of staff to work at the school are thorough and organised well.

The school is calm and orderly. Staff and governors have received training in how to identify and report any concerns they might have about a pupil's welfare. A governor supported you well by checking how confident a wide range of staff feel about this aspect of their work following safeguarding training. The pupils I spoke to were all happy at school and said they felt safe. They also confirmed that the school had helped them to understand how to stay safe when using the internet or using the roads as pedestrians or cyclists. Staff also confirmed that safeguarding was a strength of the school.

Inspection findings

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are making good progress from their starting points. Until recently, some disadvantaged children have not been making rapid enough progress to enable them to catch up with their peers,

especially in their reading and writing skills. You have made this a priority and these pupils are now starting to make better progress.

- In key stage 1, pupils continue to make good progress across a wide range of subjects. The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has improved significantly over the last three years. Staff have a good level of skill and experience in teaching phonics. By the end of Year 2, in 2016, almost all pupils achieved the expected standard in phonics.
- During key stage 2, pupils are continuing to make good progress from their starting points. In the 2016 national tests, they made particularly strong progress in writing and mathematics.
- The attendance of pupils is below average, especially for some disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent, or who are taken out of school for holidays during term time. For some of these pupils, their poor attendance is causing them to fall behind in their learning, or slowing down the rate at which they are catching up with their peers.
- You have a detailed understanding of the strengths of the school and are realistic about the areas that now need to be improved. You have worked well with governors to focus on the areas for improvement identified during the previous inspection of the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue to make the promotion of good attendance a high priority at the school and maintain a strong focus on the pupils who are persistently absent
- continue to improve the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in reading and writing, especially in the early years and key stage 1, so that this group of pupils achieves just as well as others.

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

Yours sincerely

David Bray
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and other senior leaders on several occasions and met three members of the governing body in order to discuss your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I looked at learning in classrooms across the school, checked a range of work in pupils' books and compared this to the school's records of their progress. I spoke to a group of older pupils to gain their views about the school and I listened

to their skills in sounding out letters and words. I looked at your current attendance figures and records of behaviour. I looked at the comments made by parents on Parent View, your most recent survey of the views of parents and the 26 responses made in the survey of staff at the school. I checked the effectiveness of your policies and procedures for safeguarding, including the records kept in relation to the recruitment of staff.