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Mr Adrian Hayes
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Dear Mr Hayes

Short inspection of Norton Junior 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. You lead the school with passion, drive and commitment to improve outcomes for all pupils. Consequently, leaders share a collective responsibility for school improvement. You have empowered leaders at all levels which has created greater capacity to improve the school and has inspired leaders to be ambitious and achieve increasingly high standards. This creates a feeling of enthusiasm and determination in the whole staff team.

Since your headship began in September 2013, you have successfully developed an almost entirely new senior leadership team. Together, you have been effective in delivering continually improving standards. Progress for pupils has been broadly in line with, or above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics over time. While you acknowledge there are still some areas to develop even further, in particular standards in reading and increasing attainment for disadvantaged pupils, your realistic self-evaluation means there is a relentless drive for improvement and a continued determination to succeed.

Team work is strong amongst the staff and they are proud to work at the school. Pastoral care for pupils and support for families is also a strength which contributes to the school's continuing development. Staff nurture and support pupils so that they develop as responsible individuals who show respect for each other and have excellent attitudes to their learning. Consequently, pupils value the support they

receive, take pride in their achievements and enjoy the challenge they receive in lessons.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. You and the governing body have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed, clear and up-to-date. Robust systems are in place for the recruitment and induction of new staff. Staff are clear about safeguarding procedures as a result of the induction and continued training they receive. Staff report concerns quickly and leaders respond with urgency. The school has built strong relationships with families, particularly those facing challenging or complex circumstances. Collaborative work with external agencies is effective in providing a range of support to meet the needs of individuals.

Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for in school and parents agree. The curriculum provides opportunities to support children in being safe and consequently pupils talk confidently about how to stay safe, for example, when they are online, crossing the road or riding a bicycle.

Inspection findings

- In 2016, key stage 2 progress was broadly in line with the national average for reading and was significantly above average in writing and mathematics. You have rightly prioritised developing the quality of teaching in reading in order to increase progress and therefore bring achievement in reading in line with that of writing and mathematics. Early indications suggest that this is already starting to improve outcomes in reading for current pupils and a greater proportion are on track to meet and exceed the end of key stage expectations this year.
- By the end of key stage 2 in 2016, disadvantaged pupils made progress which was broadly in line with other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. However, you realise that attainment for disadvantaged pupils is lower than that of other pupils nationally, particularly in reading. These pupils need to make accelerated progress in order to more quickly diminish the difference between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally. Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support this group and assessment information shows that the current Year 6 disadvantaged pupils are on track to be closer to the attainment of other pupils nationally by the end of the year.
- You ensure that the progress of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is carefully tracked. You have developed a robust assessment information system which is enabling leaders and teachers to identify groups and individuals who are falling behind. This earlier identification means that leaders are responding quickly and working with teachers to plan how to address any gaps in pupils' learning. Assessment information shows that pupil outcomes overall are improving and an even greater proportion of pupils are set to meet and exceed the end of key stage 2 expectations.

- Teachers are encouraged to continually reflect on their practice and what works best and they use this to fine tune the teaching approaches they adopt. They support each others' development by observing one another and sharing good practice across the wider staff team. This has resulted in greater consistency in the quality of teaching and improving outcomes over the last 3 years.
- You have ensured that subject leaders have developed the skills to check the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on pupils' outcomes. This has led to them accurately identifying and then implementing actions to bring about further improvement. Evidence in pupils' books and in lessons shows that subject leaders' actions are resulting in greater consistency in teaching approaches and that the adaptations made to the curriculum are securing improving outcomes for pupils.
- Attendance is above the national average and the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent is below the national average. Pupils are keen to be at school because they enjoy learning and value the education they receive. However, for disadvantaged pupils, there is a greater proportion who are regularly absent. This issue affects a very small number of families and close analysis by leaders is ensuring that a range of actions are taken to improve attendance for these pupils.
- Governors, although new to posts, have immediately got to work with matching their skills to the required roles and responsibilities within the governing body. They have ensured that appropriate training and support has been sought to enable them to carry out their duties as effectively as possible. This means that they are now in a position from which to provide further challenge and support for leaders in continuing to deliver improving outcomes for pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching in reading continues to develop so that achievement is as strong as it is in writing and mathematics.
- disadvantaged pupils make faster progress so that the difference between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally diminishes more quickly.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Doncaster. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Godfrey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, senior leaders, subject leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I evaluated documentation including: the school improvement plan; information about pupils' progress; governing body minutes; attendance and behaviour records; pupil and staff questionnaires; and information about safeguarding. I spoke with a range of parents and carers and considered responses from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. We visited every classroom together to observe teaching and learning and we spoke to pupils and scrutinised their work.