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Miss Stacey Harper
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Dear Miss Harper

Short inspection of Orchard Park Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 March 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 December 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school continues to improve because of your strong leadership and drive for excellence. You, your deputy headteacher, staff team and governors have a shared commitment and enthusiasm to enable all pupils to achieve the very best that they can. You have established a culture of ambition and high expectations where pupils are encouraged to 'dream big', and this is resulting in good and improved outcomes for pupils.

You understand the important role the school plays within the local community and parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the caring and nurturing environment that the school provides. In particular, parents appreciate that you value pupils as individuals and work hard to get to know every family. This is evident in the many positive statements parents made in Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and on the day of inspection. Parents commented on the 'individual approach the school takes to children' and that 'staff know each child individually, including the head and deputy who are always on the gate at school drop-off and pick-up times'. Parents consider staff to be 'professional and easily accessible'.

Leaders and governors know the school very well. You and governors continually evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses and this helps you to accurately plan for future improvement. The school's self-evaluation document is fully effective in ensuring that improvement plans focus on the most important areas. As a result

of the information governors receive, they are able to provide an effective balance of support and challenge to you and the leadership team.

You and the governors have restructured the school leadership team so that you are now ably supported by a deputy headteacher, two assistant headteachers and the special educational needs coordinator. This has strengthened the capacity of leaders to address the needs of individual pupils more effectively, and is improving outcomes for all pupils. The leadership team has focused strongly on improving the quality of teaching in the school and the results of this are clear. Leaders and governors regularly check to ensure that the quality of teaching is at least good. You use the services of the local authority to gain an additional perspective on whether the quality of teaching is good and improving, and the local authority supports you well.

The learning environment that staff create for pupils is well organised, attractive and engaging. In every classroom and across the school, striking displays celebrate pupils' achievements and remind them of all that they have learned. Your high expectations are consistently embedded in all classes, through the agreed features that you expect to see in every class. This includes, for example, displays of pupils' learning in all subjects and end-of-year goals to provide clear next steps for pupils. Pupils enjoy school because the learning experiences their teachers plan for them are relevant and engaging. One pupil commented, 'the teachers listen to me really well, and help me when I'm stuck.' Pupils' behaviour in lessons is typically positive. They are motivated learners who show great resilience, even when they find their work challenging.

You and the school's governors have maintained the strengths identified in the previous inspection and effectively addressed the areas for improvement. For example, teaching assistants are now deployed well by the school. You ensure that they receive appropriate training and professional support to improve their practice. As a result, teaching assistants show strong subject knowledge and a high level of skill, which they apply effectively to support pupils to do the best that they can. During the inspection, teaching assistants were seen teaching a phonics lesson to a small group of children, providing support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and encouraging most-able pupils to solve mathematical problems. Teaching assistants' work now contributes effectively to the increasing progress that pupils make.

You recognise that there are still areas to develop in order to move the school forward and improve the educational experience for pupils. You acknowledge that the most able pupils are not always given work that challenges them sufficiently in all classes and in all subjects. As a result, the most able pupils are not always making as rapid progress as they could be.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and maintained well. Safeguarding is everyone's

responsibility. The school's single central record of employment checks meets statutory requirements. Procedures to ensure that only suitable people are employed to work with children are suitably robust. Training for staff and governors ensures that they keep up to date and are suitably qualified and confident to implement the school's policies.

You and your staff know pupils and their families very well. The school acts swiftly when pupils may be at risk of harm. Pupils feel safe at school and they know that they can talk to staff about any problems they may have. One pupil commented that he feels safe because 'the building is secure and there are always lots of adults around'. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their children are happy and safe in school. One response made by a parent summed up the many positive comments received: 'The school and the staff give me confidence that my children will always be safe and well looked after.'

Inspection findings

- In order to check whether the school remains good, I followed a number of lines of enquiry. I considered the quality of teaching and learning in the early years and key stage 1 and the progress children make in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because published data shows that, in 2016, the proportion of children in the early years who achieved the good level of development was below the national average. This is already a priority in your improvement plans and your deputy headteacher has effectively led the actions to improve children's achievement.
- The early years curriculum has been successfully developed to include activities that appeal to children's interests and effectively promote their enjoyment of learning. For example, the Nursery children were very engaged with the 'building site' in the outside area, using large construction toys and drawing maps of the journeys they were going to make in their cardboard box 'trucks'. In the Reception class, a group of children had numbers attached to their bicycles and were enthusiastically organising themselves to put their bicycles in numerical order. Inside, children were able to choose from a range of writing and number activities because the equipment was well organised and clearly labelled for them. From looking at the work produced in children's learning journeys, it is clearly evident that the children in the Nursery and Reception classes make at least good progress from, typically, low starting points. School assessment information demonstrates that the proportion of children on track to achieve the good level of development is now much closer to the national average.
- Another area that I looked at was how effectively phonics is taught and if pupils make good progress in this area from their starting points. The proportion of pupils that reached the expected level in the Year 1 phonics check was below the national average in 2016. However, it also shows an improvement from the school's low results in 2015.
- Leaders have, rightly, taken effective action to tackle the previous weaknesses in phonics teaching. You have put well-planned, targeted support in place to improve pupils' outcomes. Pupils enjoy reading and use their knowledge of

phonics effectively to help them to work out unfamiliar words. They blend sounds together confidently to read words, and separate the sounds in words in order to spell. They can do this because teachers provide them with many opportunities to practise and develop these skills. As a result, school assessment information indicates that children's attainment in phonics will be improved and much closer to the national average in 2017.

- I investigated whether leaders are ensuring that pupils in key stage 2 make good progress in their writing. This is because, by the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils in 2016 who reached the nationally expected standard in writing, including spelling, grammar and punctuation, was below average.
- You have made valuable and rapid changes in this area and introduced a regular focus on the basic skills of handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation. Pupils have more opportunities to edit and improve their writing, based on clear criteria. The effective application of these skills can be seen in pupils' extended writing across a range of subjects. Pupils' books are full of different types of high-quality writing, for example stories, newspaper reports and structured poems. This breadth and quality of work clearly show that pupils are making at least good progress from their various starting points.
- Finally, I looked at how leaders ensure that the needs of the most able pupils are being met, so that they make rapid progress and attain well. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016 was below average.
- You know that the most able pupils need more opportunities to develop deeper learning in all curriculum subjects. During the inspection, I observed most-able pupils being effectively challenged to solve a range of mathematical problems, for example making different number combinations using three digits. A group of most-able pupils spoke enthusiastically about how teachers challenge them and how their end-of-year goals help them to see what they have learned and what they need to do next to improve. They also told me that they would like more activities 'where there are no boundaries' and where they 'have to think for themselves'. From the work in books and from speaking with pupils, the evidence shows that the most able pupils continue to make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. To improve further, you accept that the most able pupils could be better challenged by more open-ended tasks and opportunities to apply their learned skills across all subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- work is sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils, requiring them to think carefully in every lesson so that they deepen and broaden their knowledge and understanding
- provide more opportunities for the most able pupils to apply and develop their skills in all subjects across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona Webb
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- I gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This included short observations of teaching and learning, jointly with you and the deputy headteacher, in almost all classes, and sampling of pupils' current work across all subjects and across a wide range of abilities.
- I spoke informally to a number of pupils in classrooms, met more formally with groups of pupils and listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher. We discussed the key lines of enquiry for this inspection, the school's internal evaluation of its performance, plans for future improvement and information about current pupils' progress and attainment.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks made during the recruitment of new staff and case studies about referrals made to external agencies. A discussion was held with you as the school's designated safeguarding lead.
- I met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and two other governors. I also met with the local authority primary adviser and the senior adviser.
- The views of 51 parents who responded to Parent View, and those who spoke or wrote to me during the inspection, were taken into account, as well as the 49 responses parents made using the free text service.