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Mr Mike Austins
Headteacher
Norton Road Primary School
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Dear Mr Austins

Short inspection of Norton Road 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 December 2012.

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's warm and caring ethos ensures that pupils feel safe in this fully inclusive school. All staff ensure pupils achieve well, academically and socially. You have set high expectations of both your staff and pupils. As a result, pupils are well behaved, highly motivated and keen to learn. Staff consistently insist on the highest standard of presentation of work and pupils rise to the challenge well across the school.

You, senior leaders and governors have accurately identified the strengths and areas for development. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Your plans for school development contain the appropriate actions to ensure improving outcomes for pupils. You have developed a strong senior leadership team who clearly understand their roles and responsibilities. Consequently, during your long-term absence last year senior leaders led the school effectively with appropriate support when required from the local authority.

Pupils told me how much they enjoy coming to school. They are polite and well mannered, and willingly follow the school's ethos and behaviour codes. Parents spoken to on the day of the inspection commented that the school is a welcoming, safe place for their children. Pupils from different cultures and backgrounds work and play well together.

Your staff have created a positive learning environment, with attractive displays of pupils' work in classrooms and corridors. Every space is well utilised. You proudly discussed the displays focusing on the school's ethos and values, which are consistent in all of the classrooms visited.

Since the last inspection, leaders and governors have ensured that the school's feedback and marking policy is applied consistently across the school. Work is now set at the appropriate level to improve pupils' progress. However, you acknowledge that more needs to be done so that pupils make the best possible progress. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, so more of them reach the higher standards.

Reading books are increasingly more interesting and written by modern authors. Pupils are proud of the new library, which is currently displaying exciting artefacts and books, for example on the Vikings. Pupils' regular use of the library is supporting their enjoyment of reading.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding and the welfare of pupils are of the utmost importance at Norton Road Primary School. You ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and detailed records are of the highest quality. All staff have completed up-to-date safeguarding training including preventing extremism and radicalisation, and awareness of child sexual exploitation. All staff and governors understand the recent changes to 'Keeping children safe in education', September 2016.

There is a strong culture of keeping pupils safe from harm, and your determination to achieve the right outcomes for the most vulnerable families is a reflection of the caring leadership team. Timely referrals and active engagement with multi-agency support are documented well and followed up carefully and rigorously by the inclusion manager and the school's family workers.

Pupils spoken to on inspection say they feel safe in school and that they are taught about e-safety. They talk confidently about having the appropriate filters in place to keep them safe when using the internet. Pupils told me that bullying is rare, but if they have any concerns then there are adults in school to support them.

Pupils want to improve their attendance and they talked enthusiastically about the half-termly rewards for full attendance. The importance of regular attendance starts in Reception, where the children aim for a lucky dip prize for full weekly attendance.

Your staff rigorously follow school procedures for pupil absence with effective support from the school's education welfare officer to ensure attendance continues to improve.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection I considered the achievement of pupils in key stages 1 and 2 in reading and mathematics and in writing in key stage 1, with a focus on

disadvantaged pupils and the most able. This is because in 2016 too few pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieved the higher standard in these subjects. Additionally, disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 6 made less progress than others within the school and nationally. Leaders have ensured that current teaching and learning enables most pupils to make good progress in reading and mathematics across both key stages. Disadvantaged pupils are now doing as well as others in their year group. We saw evidence that a higher proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils in Year 6, are completing tasks at the higher standard in reading and mathematics.

- The focus on comprehension skills, the understanding of classic texts, reading for enjoyment, and opportunities to read across the curriculum, is helping to improve pupils' reading standards and progress across the school. The Year 6 and Year 2 pupils I listened to read spoke enthusiastically about their texts and read with fluency and understanding. Year 2 pupils used their knowledge of phonics to help them read unfamiliar words.
- In mathematics, the focus on problem solving, recall of multiplication tables and effective use of new practical strategies and resources is supporting pupils' learning well. This has been enhanced by the school's voluntary participation in a local authority project to improve standards, which is increasing pupils' confidence and perseverance.
- Staff use opportunities from professional visitors to improve pupils' learning. After a whole-school presentation by an author, we observed Year 2 pupils enthusiastically and quickly forming a poem based on 'What the teacher says'. This developed speaking, listening, reading and writing skills effectively for all groups of children.
- Year 2 pupils use their knowledge of phonics to improve their spelling and writing skills, as seen in English and topic books. Leaders have ensured that key stage 1 staff have had training in a combined reading, writing and phonics strategy to further improve pupils' literacy skills.
- We saw opportunities for pupils to extend their literacy skills across the curriculum in topic and English books throughout the school. However, there were fewer opportunities seen for pupils to strengthen their mathematical understanding across other subjects.
- I investigated how leaders are improving outcomes in the early years following a dip in the good level of development in 2016. Together, we observed the bright, stimulating learning environments created by the early years leader and her staff. Children's work in books and on display shows that most children, including disadvantaged children, are making good progress, from their various starting points. During a phonics session children were able to improve their spelling, reading and writing skills through carefully planned activities that met their different abilities and needs. We saw children working well together and listening to adults carefully. Children are making faster progress than the previous Reception cohort, to help them achieve a good level of development.
- In 2016, the attendance for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and were receiving additional support was lower than that of others in the school. Persistent absence for this group was also high. The inclusion

manager, family workers and education welfare officer work closely together to improve the attendance of this group of pupils. They provide suitable support and challenge for the relevant families when required. Leaders ensure that all pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive targeted support to meet their requirements so that they make good progress from their various starting points. We saw evidence of this good progress in pupils' English and numeracy books.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are continually challenged so that they make the best possible progress and reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics across the school
- there are more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum to deepen their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Harrison
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

- I met with you, senior and middle leaders, the chair of governors and a representative of the local authority.
- I listened to pupils reading and spoke with a group of pupils.
- I looked at a range of documentation including information about the school's self-evaluation and plans for future improvement.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks and case studies about referrals made to external agencies.
- We visited most classrooms together to observe pupils' learning and look at work in pupils' books. I looked in detail at the work of the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- I spoke with several parents when they were bringing children to school.
- I read through the five comments placed by parents on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.