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Mr Michael Snowden
North Town Primary School
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Dear Mr Snowden

Short inspection of North Town Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 March 2017 with Janet Maul, Ofsted Inspector, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have continued to build a team of senior and middle leaders who have a passion for the school and they contribute strongly to its development. All leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and use their expertise to support its continuing development. Parents recognise and value all staff members as making the school a place which is 'caring, welcoming and inclusive'.

The Nursery opened in September 2016. This provision is fast becoming an integral part of the high-quality early years provision of the school. Your skilled early years leader has been instrumental in developing the quality of teaching and has made a strong start to realise this.

You and your senior leaders have a secure understanding of what needs further improvement. When you have agreed an area for improvement, you move swiftly to bring about effective change. You ensure that teachers understand what pupils need to know to achieve the higher expectations of the current national curriculum. For example, as a result of effective staff training, teachers now routinely challenge pupils' mathematical reasoning skills and provide challenging problems for pupils to solve. Consequently, more pupils are working at greater depth.

You value the support and challenge you get from governors. You provide accurate reports so that governors have the information they need to review the spending of additional funding to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. There have been

variabilities in the progress of disadvantaged pupils over the time since the previous inspection, with the best progress being made by disadvantaged pupils in early years and key stage 1. You are working closely together to make sure this funding is having the maximum impact on the achievement of all disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils enjoy learning, behave well and are diligent. They are very positive about the wide opportunities to take part in sport and after-school clubs.

Safeguarding is effective.

You expect everyone to take responsibility for keeping pupils safe from harm and staff are proud of the contribution they make to the culture of vigilance. Two additional leaders have recently taken on the role of deputy designated safeguarding leader role in order to ensure continuity of cover for the 49 weeks the Nursery is open. All staff undergo a rigorous process of induction for safeguarding when they join the school and their training is updated regularly. The governor who has responsibility for safeguarding monitors the impact of training through discussions with staff. Leaders confirm that staff are confident and prompt in reporting concerns. Records for all aspects of safeguarding are detailed and of a high quality, including checks made when recruiting staff.

Site safety is robust and you have recognised the particular need for visitor checks at all times, given that the Nursery operates extended hours and in the traditional school holiday time.

Talking to parents, we found them to be happy and to believe that their children are safe in school. The vast majority of parents agree that their children are well cared for.

Inspection findings

- We discussed your self-evaluation and agreed the key lines of enquiry we would follow during this short inspection.
- Our first line of enquiry examined the progress that pupils in Years 3 to 6 make in reading. As a team, you have investigated why standards were not as high in reading at the end of Year 6 last summer. You have raised the profile of reading, for example through the reinvigorated library and giving pupils more help to choose appropriate books. You have made improvements to the way teachers teach and assess reading. Teachers now place more weight on pupils explaining what they understand from their reading. Teachers now have a more accurate understanding of when pupils are at the expected level for their age or are working at greater depth. As a result, in a short period of time, pupils' rates of progress in reading have been accelerated. You are rightly continuing to make this aspect of the school's work a priority, recognising that further checks are needed to ensure that these improved ways of teaching are having an equal impact across all classes.
- Our second key line of enquiry related to how effective the use of additional funding is leading to improved achievement for disadvantaged pupils in key stage

2. Teachers plan specific interventions to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils. They and leaders monitor assessment information regularly and quickly identify and remedy any possible slowing of progress for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, workbooks show that disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, are making good progress in mathematics. Their rapid progress in reading is bringing the vast majority of disadvantaged pupils to the standards expected for their age.

- As leaders and governors, you are now more sharply evaluating where spending of the pupil premium has had the greatest impact. For example, the strategies you have used in Years 5 and 6 has improved the progress of disadvantaged pupils in these years. While the use of funding is now much sharper, governors recognise that they should continue to monitor the effectiveness of the school's spending to improve disadvantaged pupils' outcomes.
- You valued the opportunity to review the effectiveness of Nursery with me as my third line of enquiry. Nursery staff are appropriately qualified and the Nursery manager ensures that staffing is at the right level at all points of the day and year. Routines are well established in the Nursery and children thrive in the calm and supportive atmosphere. Children have good opportunities to learn and play and learn both inside and out. Staff know children well and individual care needs are met well. For instance, children can have a snack in their own time and there is a dedicated quiet space for children to sleep. Staff are careful to ensure children's dignity when changing nappies but the space to do this is limited.
- Staff understand the needs of two-year-olds at different points in their development. Two-year-old children explore their individual interests but also play and learn safely alongside the older children if they choose to do so. However, the activities which are planned do not sufficiently support children's language development. Regular assessments are made of what children know and need to learn next, including at the two-year-old check, but targets for speaking skills do not identify precisely enough which features of language need to be developed.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' comprehension skills are further developed, so pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, make consistently strong progress in reading across Years 3 to 6
- teaching in the Nursery more sharply identifies children's next steps in learning and engaging, and purposeful activities, particularly to develop children's speaking and communication skills, are planned to develop them
- the impact of additional funding for accelerating disadvantaged pupils' progress is regularly reviewed so that these pupils reach standards at least as high as other pupils nationally.

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

Yours sincerely

Wendy Marriott
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, my colleague and I met with you and senior leaders to discuss aspects of the school's work, including plans to continue to improve. We visited classrooms to see the impact of the work you are doing to accelerate pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6. I also made visits to the Reception classes and Year 1 and 2, with a senior leader. We looked at samples of pupils' work and heard pupils read. Documentation, policies on the website and discussions with staff gave me information about your procedures for keeping pupils safe. I met with four governors, including the chair of the board of trustees, and also reviewed the minutes of the full governing body.

I took into account the 104 responses from parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, the 93 written comments and the 46 responses to the staff questionnaire. We met with a group of pupils and, more informally, pupils' views were listened to at lunchtime. I took account of the 143 responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire.

I visited the Nursery and met with leaders and managers. I observed children learning and being cared for at different points of the day and discussed the planning and assessment of children's learning, particularly for two-year-olds. I reviewed Nursery routines, staff qualifications and safeguarding practices with the manager.

Following the conclusion of this inspection, a complaint was received by Ofsted. Ofsted does not have the power to investigate individual complaints of this kind and has passed it on to the relevant department within the local authority.