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Mrs Mary James
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs James

Short inspection of Boughton Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Both you and the interim headteacher have ensured that despite a period of significant decline after the last inspection, the school is once again improving.

After the appointment in May 2016 of the interim headteacher, the decline in achievement and in behaviour started to be addressed more systematically. During this time, senior and middle leadership were also strengthened. Staff and governors 'pulled together' and worked to improve pupils' progress by addressing specific weaknesses in pupils' reading, writing and mathematics. As result, most pupils are once again reaching their potential. You have continued this good work and ensured that the pace of improvement has increased still further.

The work on improving the school's ethos by extensive focus on pupils' values and on their personal development and behaviour has also been significant, as demonstrated by the views of pupils, staff and parents alike. The vast majority of parents speak highly of the school, with many outlining how happy their children are, the good progress they make and the professionalism of the staff.

Pupils' behaviour is good; they listen carefully to the instructions from their teachers and try their best in their work. Around school and in class, pupils are polite, well mannered and keen to help staff, visitors and other pupils alike, should they require assistance.

Since the decline, the teachers have taken much greater ownership of the quality of teaching in the school and of pupils' progress by addressing specific areas for improvement. Those with key areas of responsibility now evaluate previous and current assessment information and make better use of this in their plans for school improvement. They track the attainment and progress of the pupils in their class carefully and use this information to help them to plan lessons and individual or group sessions for pupils who need to catch up or be further challenged. Teachers are self-reflective and act readily on recommendations from colleagues and from the headteacher.

You have taken steps to raise attainment by the end of key stage 1 in writing and mathematics. Although you have identified that more pupils are making better progress this year, you are aware that there are still too few reaching the highest standards.

The information on the school's website about the curriculum, the pupil premium and the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding does not meet the requirements set out by the government. This needs to be addressed quickly so that parents have all the correct information.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils speak animatedly about the importance of demonstrating the school's new values. They even include in their creative writing characters who display such attributes as compassion, honesty and courage.

Pupils who spoke to me during the inspection and those who responded to the online questionnaire say that they feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online and recent work has resulted in parents and pupils alike ensuring that pupils are now safer online by, for example, deleting accounts to sites they now realise are not safe enough. Recent lessons on the impact of bullying have also helped to address historical concerns that some parents and pupils had previously raised about bullying. Pupils are happy at school and say there is now no bullying. They are also confident that all staff listen to any concerns or problems that they have.

Most safeguarding records are clear and fit for purpose, and others are meticulous and detailed. Our evaluations during my visit, however, indicated that some administrative elements of safeguarding, while they in no way undermined the practice of safeguarding children in school, would benefit from being strengthened by using a more systematic approach that could be monitored more easily (for example by governors). I was particularly impressed that some of these ideas we discussed in the morning had already been drafted by the afternoon.

Inspection findings

- During the period of decline, boys did not achieve well in writing in the early years. Significant improvements to inspire boys to want to write and changes to planning and teaching have ensured that boys now achieve well, so this area of learning no longer holds them back. During the inspection, we observed both boys and girls alike keen to draw posters and to write to warn others about the dinosaur whose footprints and other 'tell-tale' signs (such as scratches to the wall) were found throughout the early years learning area that morning. They used their phonics knowledge well to successfully sound out unknown words, some independently and some carefully guided by staff.
- Increasing attainment at greater depth by the end of key stage 1 in writing and mathematics is still an area for the school which you accept needs to be further developed. Frequent changes to the teaching staff in Years 1 and 2 in recent years have impacted on the consistency of some of the most able pupils' progress. Lower than national average starting points for too many boys in writing at the end of early years have also impacted negatively on attainment in recent years. Sometimes, work is not well matched to pupils' ability and teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- We also agreed that progress in key stage 2 in reading should be a focus for the inspection. Most pupils across the school read widely and often. They choose a wide range of books and the majority of pupils also choose texts which challenge them. This is especially true of the most able throughout key stage 2. Pupils are often keen to read the latest books from their favourite authors and most talk confidently about books they have enjoyed, giving pertinent reasons for their likes and dislikes. In recent years, given the school's previously high standards in reading at the end of key stage 1, the school has struggled to maintain good progress throughout key stage 2. However, current assessment information, observations and discussions with staff and pupils indicate that progress in key stage 2 is now at least good. Teachers have ensured that pupils tackle more complex texts in guided reading lessons and are increasingly able to make inferences and deductions within this level of challenge.
- Governors did not shirk their responsibilities to challenge the previous leadership of the school when standards started to decline. However, a period of staffing instability led to a period of weak progress, particularly at the end of key stage 2 in reading. It also impacted negatively on pupils' behaviour and some aspects of leadership and management. Once the governing body secured the services of an interim headteacher alongside the local authority's school improvement team, it became clear to governors that there was a need to improve the skills represented on the governing body. The governors are now moving forward with a stronger team. More recent evidence from minutes of meetings and discussions with governors indicate that challenge and support are well balanced and the governing body is self-evaluative and focused on the required identified improvements. Support from the local authority improvement partner has been effective. In the past year, it has helped to provide additional monitoring and evaluation information as well as guidance on strategic direction, which has been particularly helpful to the governing body.

- The most up to date information has not been uploaded to the school's website with regard to the impact of the pupil premium and the PE and sport premium. While the information about the curriculum in the early years is informative, the information about the school's curriculum in Years 1 to 6 lacks sufficient detail to inform parents about what their children are learning about. The school has not informed parents through its website of the phonics and reading schemes which it uses.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more pupils achieve greater depth in writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 by having higher expectations of what they can achieve and by structuring the learning to ensure that all pupils are challenged at the right level
- the school's website is updated so that it meets the legal requirements in relation to more detail about the curriculum, and the impact of the pupil premium and the PE and sport premium funding.

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

Yours sincerely

Angela Kirk
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Prior to the inspection, I checked the school's website to ensure that it met the legal requirements. During this inspection, I met with you and your senior and middle leadership team. I also met with members of the governing body, including the chair. We conducted a tour of the school together and visited all classes to consider the quality of work in books and, in most cases, to see pupils and staff at work. We considered pupils' different starting points when considering their progress. I listened to pupils read, met with pupils and considered the views of 51 parents using the online Parent View survey. I also considered the responses of staff and pupils using the online survey. I evaluated a range of documents provided by the school, including the school's improvement plan, governors' minutes of their meetings and pupils' assessment information.