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Miss Cathie Doyle  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Doyle

### **Short inspection of Fossdene Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 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 2011.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, your leaders and governors use information astutely to decide on actions aimed at improving outcomes for pupils. You have realised that pupils need to develop greater resilience, as teachers have raised their ambitions for what could be achieved and set harder work. You also recognise that some pupils must be supported to gain more confidence when talking about their learning. You have ensured that middle leaders are able to conduct skilful checks on the impact of teaching on maintaining good standards. This has resulted in improvements in the progress of pupils who have not reached the expected standard in some subjects. For example, disadvantaged pupils who did not meet the expected standard in phonics in Year 1 in 2016 are now back on track with their peers.

Governors possess a broad range of skills and experience, which they use well to challenge and support you. You work together with cohesion and a common purpose, which has ensured that areas identified for improvement at the last inspection have been tackled effectively. For example, you have focused sharply on improving teachers' ability to set work that challenges the most able pupils appropriately. You recognise, however, that teachers need to make expectations for how these pupils can improve their mathematical reasoning more explicit. Your middle leaders also insist that teachers provide less able pupils with time to think about more challenging activities so that they can succeed in these rather than being set easier work.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection in respect of the early years provision. The proportion of children attaining a good level of development has continued to match that for children nationally for the last three years. This is because you and your leaders have made sure that staff make more effective use of the time they spend with children. Weaknesses in children's progress are identified promptly and tackled well. For example, their current progress in writing has picked up this year. However, you recognise that, while the outdoor area has improved since the last inspection, you need to do more to use outdoor opportunities to develop children's early writing skills.

The parents and pupils I spoke to were positive about your impact on maintaining the school's good quality of provision. Parents particularly appreciate the school's 'family feel' and the regular, comprehensible information they receive about how well their children are doing.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The training you arrange to help staff understand current guidance and implement your agreed policies helps them recognise signs of emerging concerns and to report them effectively. Your recent decision to appoint two family link workers is strengthening your ability to tackle concerns and communicate even better with parents. Governors use their knowledge of the 'Prevent' duty to keep the curriculum under review. As a result, they are rightly confident that it provides what they describe as an effective 'counterweight' to those who might attempt to exert a negative influence on pupils' behaviour.

Pupils speak confidently about your work to help them understand and respond to different forms of bullying. They understand how to minimise the risks of revealing their identity when using the internet. Most parents and staff share pupils' positive view of the school's work to keep pupils safe.

### **Inspection findings**

- We decided to look in detail at the current progress of the most able pupils in key stage 2 in mathematics as a key line of enquiry in this inspection. Leaders have been focusing on ensuring that the work teachers set these pupils provides suitable challenge to ensure that they make good progress.
- You insist that teachers have higher expectations for what pupils can achieve. The work I looked at from current pupils, which included the most able disadvantaged pupils, indicates that they make good progress in making the transition to using more efficient methods of calculation. They confidently apply skills in using graphical methods and interpreting data. Teachers also provide interesting opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in other subjects.

- Teachers make sure that pupils know exactly what the purpose of each lesson is and what they are expected to achieve. However, they do not typically place sufficient emphasis on explaining how pupils can make progress in reasoning and applying mathematical concepts when setting out what pupils should be learning.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 1 was lower than that for other pupils nationally in 2016. The school's own information shows that additional funding has been used successfully to ensure that most of these pupils quickly caught up at the beginning of Year 2. Pupils who read to me could attempt to pronounce unfamiliar words with confidence and accuracy. However, some had to think about how to pronounce words so often that they struggled to keep up with the meaning of the story.
- The most able readers who spoke to me discussed dilemmas, which characters in their books needed to confront with great authority. They could explain why they had a preference for a particular genre of book. The written work pupils complete in response to reading across the school demonstrates their good progress in reading comprehension.
- The last inspection identified a need to improve the provision in the outdoor area in the early years and the effectiveness of the deployment of staff. Since then, leaders have improved arrangements so that staff use their time and the resources available more effectively to support children's learning. As a result, children make consistently good progress from their starting points. You make sure that when leaders pick up on dips in children's progress, they ensure that changes are made to help reverse these setbacks. For example, the progress of children in writing in the current year has improved and nearly all children are on track to achieve a good level of development. We agreed that children are not supported as well, or provided with such effective opportunities, to develop their writing outdoors.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- further steps are taken to develop the outdoor area in the early years, particularly to support children's progress in writing
- there is a sharper focus on the development of pupils' ability to reason and apply their skills in mathematics when teachers plan lessons.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Wright  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I held discussions with you and other senior and middle leaders about the impact of your work on outcomes for pupils. I met with representatives of the governing body and a member of the local authority. I visited classes with you to look at the work pupils have done and to ask them about their learning. I heard pupils read and asked them about their views of the school. I scrutinised documents related to safeguarding and the school's self-evaluation. There were 31 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey taken into account, including a number of written responses from parents. I also met a number of parents at the beginning of the school day. Outcomes of the electronic pupil and staff surveys provided by Ofsted were also considered.