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Lisa Jeffery
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Dear Mrs Jeffery

Short inspection of Raunds Park Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 29 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 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. Leaders and governors are aspirational for pupils and committed to the continued improvement of the school. You have a precise and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. You have used your detailed knowledge of pupils to create a sharply focused school improvement plan, designed to maximise pupils' progress, which is known and understood by all.

You have maintained the significant strengths noted at the last inspection, particularly in terms of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are happy, confident and proud of the school. You ensure that the school's core values, such as friendliness and thoughtfulness, are regularly reinforced and rewarded through assemblies and lessons. Parents and pupils appreciate the warm and welcoming family atmosphere which you have created.

Leaders have worked closely to address the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. You provide appropriate training for all staff linked to whole-school developments. We saw together that all staff are consistent in their application of school systems and policies. This is helping to improve the progress which pupils make during their time at the school.

Although pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 was below the national

averages in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016, you have worked hard to improve the provision at the school and the progress which pupils make. You have achieved this by introducing a creative curriculum, which engages pupils' interests, captures their imaginations and develops their key literacy and numeracy skills.

You have made improving pupils' writing a whole-school priority and ensured that this starts in the early years. Teachers in Reception make sure that there are lots of opportunities for children to write, during both indoor and outdoor activities. This is helping to secure children's understanding of sounds, letters and spellings. For example, we saw children excitedly writing down their food and drink orders at the 'seaside café'.

Leaders have ensured that topics, such as superheroes and pirates, engage boys' interests. This is helping boys to make better progress, so that it matches that of girls. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and use questions effectively to develop pupils' knowledge. Teachers are now more consistently providing challenge for the most able pupils. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the most able pupils were encouraged to use the conjunction 'because' and a range of different sentence openers in their writing. Pupils listen intently in lessons, get on with their work quickly and enjoy learning. Pupils in Year 1 recently learned about London and the queen, as part of their 'bright lights, big city' topic. They then produced some impressive, extended writing, using full stops and lively description.

Teachers consistently emphasise the importance of using correct grammar and language to pupils. This is helping pupils to improve their writing. Year 2 pupils learned about similes and went on to write wanted posters for the big, bad wolf. One pupil wrote, 'His teeth are as pointy as an elegant dragon's spine.'

You acknowledge that attainment for disadvantaged pupils has been inconsistent and below national expectations. You appointed a pupil premium manager, to provide disadvantaged pupils with additional support, to address this. You both showed me case studies of the personalised support which each pupil receives, which you carefully review and monitor. Evidence in pupils' books demonstrates that this support is ensuring that disadvantaged pupils now make better progress. Where required, some disadvantaged pupils also receive effective well-being support to remove any barriers to their learning. This has helped a number of pupils become more settled and confident. Consequently, they enjoy school much more than in the past.

Current school information indicates that pupils' attainment at key stage 1 will improve this year, and that the difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally will continue to diminish.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team rightly makes the safety of pupils its highest priority. You have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders and governors complete an annual

safeguarding audit to check that safeguarding arrangements continue to be robust. All statutory checks on staff are carried out and recorded carefully. All staff receive regular and appropriate training and have a good understanding of their responsibilities to ensure children's safety and well-being. The records you showed me indicate that staff make prompt referrals when they have any concerns. Leaders are tenacious in seeking external support when needed. You and your team take great pride in knowing each pupil and their family well and this ensures prompt action should the need arise.

You have ensured that pupils have a good understanding of equality and recognise that people cannot be treated unfairly because, for example, of their race, belief or sexual orientation. You have explained, in language pupils can understand, potential dangers and how pupils can keep themselves safe. Reminders on classroom doors tell pupils, 'we all have the right to feel safe all of the time' and 'we can talk with someone about anything even if it feels awful or small'. You have also encouraged pupils to write down the names of five people who they can trust and talk to. Pupils who I spoke with said they feel safe at the school.

Inspection findings

- The governing body provides leaders with effective support and challenge. Governors make sure that additional government funding is used to have a positive impact on pupils' well-being and progress. Governors keep their skills up to date with regular training.
- You have ensured that there is an effective assessment and tracking system in place that provides you with a clear analysis of the progress and attainment of each pupil. Teachers work with staff from other local schools and the local authority to ensure that their assessments are accurate. They use assessment information about pupils to plan learning that builds successfully on what most pupils already know and leads to good progress. Staff are now more confident about the new national standards for the end of key stage 1, and what pupils need to do to achieve them.
- All pupils have personalised challenge target cards, to help them with the next steps in their learning. Parents receive regular updates about the progress that their child is making. Leaders regularly check assessment information and provide timely intervention for any pupil who is falling behind. Leaders are not afraid to change things when they are not working or having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Classrooms are attractive; displays and resources provide pupils with helpful prompts and examples of how to make their work better. Pupils are encouraged to be independent from an early age, from signing up for their lunch choice to using the learning prompts provided for them.
- The majority of children who start in Reception have skills which are below those typical for their age. You have provided staff with training to support pupils with their early speech and language development. You have a consistent approach to teaching pupils phonics. I heard pupils reading and using the techniques which the school has taught them, to sound out difficult and unfamiliar words. Since,

the last inspection, children's attainment in the early years and the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 have risen year on year.

- Pupils are keen and enthusiastic readers. You have placed the well-resourced library at the heart of the school and reward pupils who read regularly. A display on the wall shows pupils reading in 'extreme' places. The pupils who I heard read all said they enjoyed reading and had books that provided them with suitable challenge.
- You have revised your mathematics curriculum to provide more well-planned and meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills. Teachers are currently working on a mastery of mathematics project with the local junior school, to support pupils with their reasoning and problem-solving skills. Current school information indicates that pupils' progress in mathematics is improving rapidly as a result.
- Parents hold the school and its staff in high esteem. All parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire would recommend the school to others.
- Levels of pupils' attendance have been above the national average since the last inspection but disadvantaged pupils are absent from school more often than other pupils. However, through publishing weekly attendance figures, celebrating good attendance and challenging absences promptly, leaders are taking all possible steps to maximise all pupils' attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' attainment, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils, continues to improve so that the proportions of pupils meeting and exceeding standards in reading, writing and mathematics, by the end of key stage 1, are at least in line with the national averages.

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

Sally Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with parents at the start of the day and met with you. I also met with senior leaders and representatives from the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of governors. I listened to pupils read and met with a group of pupils in key stage 1 to talk about their school experience. You and I visited all classes and examined pupils' workbooks, as well as talking to pupils, to evaluate the quality of their learning. In addition, I scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the school's record of safeguarding recruitment checks on staff. I evaluated the school's documentation in relation to pupils' attainment and progress and reviewed the school's own evaluation of its work and improvement plans. I took account of the 19 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 18 responses from parents to the Ofsted free-text service. The 12 responses to the online staff survey and the 30 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey were also considered.