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5 May 2017

Mr Simon Wakeman
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Dear Mr Wakeman

Short inspection of Mundesley Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 22 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Pupils continue to develop strong academic and social skills. Parents are supportive of the quality of teaching and learning and this is evident in the many positive statements made in Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Parents noted the 'family feel about the school... warm, welcoming and caring', the 'safe environment' and the 'excellent teachers'.

Despite ongoing changes to the school's structure within The Coastal Federation (a federation of three local schools), focused leadership, including that of governors, has ensured that the school's drive for improvement has continued. The changes are recognised by most parents as positive. One parent commented that they could not 'ask for a better school' for their child. Some parents are unsure about the closer relationship with the other schools in The Coastal Federation.

Your clear vision, balanced by demonstrable improvements, is ensuring better outcomes for pupils. The school improvement plan is robust and the leadership team, including governors, work tirelessly to implement its key priorities.

Governance at Mundesley Junior is strong. School visits, meetings with leaders and staff, and discussions with pupils enable governors to gather critical information linked to the school development priorities. The governing board is thus able to challenge and support in equal measure.

Pupils' conduct around the school is very good. They are respectful and supportive of each other's needs. In lessons, most pupils are enthusiastic and eager to learn. They respond to teachers' expectations well. You have successfully embedded the key British values of democracy, tolerance and freedom of speech within the curriculum. I spoke to many pupils who told me about the role of the pupil-led Mundesley Support Squad in resolving issues in the playground. Similarly, many pupils told me about their positive experiences of democracy and the school council. You have ensured that the curriculum develops thoughtful and compassionate citizens of the future, through engagement with fundraising for social issues such as the Cromer foodbank and a school in Pakistan.

You correctly judge the teaching of reading to be a strength of the school. Strong leadership of reading has ensured that many pupils enjoy a breadth of challenging texts, such as 'Beowulf' and 'The Iron Man'. Pupils I observed and spoke to were very excited about the characters and themes in the texts and eager to write about them. The learning environment throughout the school is well organised, bright and stimulating. Pupils actively use the learning resources in the classrooms to support their understanding. I observed many pupils use the 'vocabulary walls' to help them explain their understanding of the books they were reading. The library is an attractive, self-contained resource run by pupils and used regularly by pupils. The proportion of pupils achieving well in reading has increased significantly and is above the national average.

You and your leaders take effective action where you consider improvements are required. As a result of your developments in the teaching of writing, outcomes at key stage 2 improved in 2016. You recognise that there is still room for improvement and, for example, you have focused rigorously on strengthening the use of assessment to inform the level of challenge in the work set for pupils. Pupils regularly self- and peer-assess each other's work to develop their understanding of how they are progressing in each area of the curriculum. Pupils have clearly defined targets to help them make progress. To further strengthen the role of assessment in developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, you have recently introduced an assertive mentoring programme whereby pupils meet regularly with their teacher to review their learning. It is too soon to measure the impact of the changes.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils speak very positively and articulately about the school and the ways in which leaders ensure their well-being and safety. Pupils are able to explain the strategies they have been taught to ensure that they are safe at all times. They are very alert to the potential dangers of the internet. All parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their children are safe, well cared for and happy in their learning.

Pupils are able to define bullying and the many forms it can take. Pupils I spoke to were adamant that bullying was rare at their school and that swift action was taken to resolve any issues. Pupils spoke very positively about the role of the Mundesley Support Squad in helping them form good relationships with each other. Pupils were also confident that adults would deal swiftly with any unpleasant issues.

Leaders, including governors, ensure that safeguarding processes are robust. Records, including the checks made on adults who work at the school, are diligently and securely maintained. Inspection evidence demonstrates that when pupils require additional support, timely and appropriate action is taken. Leaders are tenacious in ensuring the well-being of all pupils. The school established the Family Support Team, which maintains a close and effective network of ongoing support to meet pupils' needs.

Adults receive statutory training to strengthen their ability to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. They are aware of the actions they would take if they had any concerns about the safety of children. Adults follow the school's clear processes for reporting and recording safeguarding concerns.

Inspection findings

- In order to ascertain that the school remains good, I followed a number of lines of enquiry. Pupils' attendance was raised as a recommendation in the previous inspection report. This formed my first line of enquiry. The school has worked tirelessly to improve overall attendance. Attendance for all pupils is now above the national average. You have taken decisive action to reduce absence through careful recording, monitoring, reviewing and evaluating of attendance. Consequently, no group of pupils is held back by low attendance. All pupils are aware of their attendance record through regular attendance cards that are colour-coded to denote the number of days of attendance at school. There is a successful system of rewards for attendance, ranging from weekly whole-class awards to individual rewards. Pupils that I spoke to were able to make clear links between school attendance and academic achievement.
- I considered the progress that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make across the curriculum. The number of pupils in each year group is very small. They did not make consistently good progress in 2015, but this improved in 2016 across key stage 2. You and your leadership team have a very clear understanding of the barriers that the pupils face, while ensuring that the school maintains an inclusive ethos. As a result, the pupils are part of mainstream classroom life. As part of the structure of targeted support offered to all pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive tailored pre-school intervention in reading, writing and mathematics. This is carefully assessed to inform ongoing support but tasks in class are not always accessible to the pupils. Teachers do not consistently set tasks that match their learning needs, resulting in some pupils not making consistently sufficient progress.
- Leaders carefully track the progress that pupils make across the curriculum to inform pupils' next steps and to ensure that work in class matches their needs. This is done rigorously and is effective in supporting the majority of pupils. Most pupils are aware of their next steps and these are reviewed regularly. Challenge is embedded highly effectively in every area of the curriculum, which facilitates the accelerated progress of the most able pupils. The carefully constructed curriculum ensures that most pupils are engaged with their learning and are able to articulate what they need to do to improve. Evidence from pupils' books, lesson observations

and discussions with pupils supports the fact that most pupils are making strong progress across a range of subjects. However, more needs to be done to ensure that lower-ability pupils are provided with tasks that match their needs. These pupils are not always able to access the high level of challenge embedded in lessons and, subsequently, do not always make sufficient progress.

- I also sought to establish how well assessment information is used to identify pupils' next steps in writing. The previous inspection report identified attainment in writing as less than that in reading and mathematics. Current work in pupils' books demonstrates that most pupils in key stage 2 achieve well in writing. The teaching of writing is strong across the school. The learning environment is conducive to supporting pupils' writing development. Pupils actively use the learning walls to support their technical accuracy and vocabulary but spelling errors are not consistently addressed.
- The transformation of the curriculum to one based on a text such as 'Beowulf' has helped to facilitate more opportunities for pupils to write for a range of audiences, purposes and text types. Teachers use assessment information to identify clear next steps and to match tasks to the needs of most pupils. However, the level of challenge embedded in writing tasks can sometimes be too high and exclude lower-ability pupils from engaging fully in the learning.
- I reviewed the ways in which assessment was employed to support pupils' next steps and to ensure that tasks matched their needs in mathematics. Evidence in books demonstrates that most pupils make strong progress. Next steps are clearly defined and reviewed regularly. Many pupils told me that they enjoyed mathematics lessons; one pupil said that it was 'really entertaining'. You and your leadership team assiduously track pupils' progress. As a result, you have identified issues with pupils' mathematical reasoning skills and have immediately established a training programme for teachers to strengthen this specific area.
- I considered how effective the curriculum was in developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of the world they live in. The revised curriculum draws themes for each of the curriculum areas and is successful in engaging pupils. Through careful analysis of the data, you identified that boys were not making as much progress as girls in writing and reviewed the use of texts to ensure that they appealed to boys. The texts now appeal to both genders and ensure that pupils develop a strong understanding of Britain and its place in the world. You and your leadership team also accurately identified issues with the science curriculum and have reviewed the development of pupils' skills, as well as coverage of key topics.
- My final key line of enquiry focused on how pupils were prepared to keep themselves safe, both within school and beyond. I found that the curriculum has an explicit focus on developing pupils' awareness of how to keep themselves physically and emotionally safe. Pupils explore challenging themes throughout the curriculum. Evidence in books, lesson observations and discussions with pupils demonstrated a high level of empathy and emotional resilience. Pupils are aware of school systems designed to support them if they have any issues. They are also acutely aware of how to keep themselves safe when online, due to the strong messages delivered in class and in assembly. Pupils told me that they can always approach staff to help with an issue and the Family Support Team has been instrumental in ensuring the

safeguarding of vulnerable pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- activities and support match the needs of lower-ability pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that they can make progress in line with their peers
- a uniform approach to spelling is embedded across the year groups, to ensure that pupils develop their technical accuracy in writing
- teaching and the curriculum ensure that pupils make accelerated progress in all areas of the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Aykin

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- During the course of this inspection I held meetings with you, other senior and middle leaders, and a group of four governors. I also spoke with a representative from the local authority on the telephone.
- I spoke with pupils informally in classrooms and when walking around the school site. I also met with a group of 12 pupils chosen by you.
- During two tours of the school with you, I visited each class and observed pupils at work.
- I undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work in their books and folders.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, along with the school's record of checks carried out on staff working at the school.
- A range of documents were analysed or discussed, including: the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; documents relating to pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour; minutes of governor meetings; and curriculum plans.
- I considered the views of 42 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views parents expressed via free text. I also took into account the views of parents who spoke with me over the course of the inspection.