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21 June 2017

Mrs J Lillycrop
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Dear Mrs Lillycrop

Short inspection of Edmund de Moundeford VC Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 May 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 July 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 and the deputy headteacher make a strong team in driving improvement. You are very ably supported by governors, many of whom have educational expertise. Together, you have created a school ethos that is ambitious and optimistic. Pupils are given the confidence to push themselves to their full potential.

This is a happy school where pupils feel safe and valued as individuals. Parents who spoke to me were very positive about their children's experiences. They said that their children were happy and learning well. This is also the case in the early years, where improvement in the provision has led to a steep rise in the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.

Pupils enjoy their roles as 'learning leaders' visiting different classes with senior leaders and commenting upon what they feel works well and making suggestions for things to be even better. A pupil told me, 'We had to do your job and ask people questions about their learning.'

Teaching continues to improve. It is good across the school and pupils make good progress. Teachers have the opportunity to share best practice and learn from one another's strengths. Rigorous monitoring ensures that teaching staff receive precise feedback about how they can improve their work. You invest a lot in staff training. You encourage members of staff to pursue their interests and to develop specialisms, for example in supporting pupils on the autistic spectrum. Performance management is rigorous. Teaching staff are given challenging targets linked to the progress of pupils and whole-school priorities and you ensure that they meet them.

At the time of the previous inspection, the school was asked to raise standards of work and improve achievement in mathematics. You have been successful in bringing this about. In the 2016 national assessments for Year 2 pupils, standards in mathematics were above average both at the expected standard and at greater depth. While standards at the end of Year 6 in 2016 were not so strong, there were particular factors affecting that year group, including pupils arriving late in their school career. Work in books for current pupils shows that they are making good progress over time in mathematics and that standards are at least in line with expectations in each year group. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to reason and solve problems. For example, Year 4 pupils were asked to work out 'how many legs are there in the school?'

At the previous inspection, the school was also asked to develop pupils' writing. Pupils did well in the 2016 assessments at the end of both key stages, especially at greater depth. In many classes, displays of good-quality writing show that pupils are writing in a variety of genres and for different audiences. In Year 6, pupils were inspired by Ernest Shackleton's adventures in the Antarctic. One pupil, describing the journey from Elephant Island, wrote, 'The boat tossed and tumbled through the gale-swept seas.'

The school's focus on accuracy and presentation has resulted in improvements in handwriting and fewer careless mistakes. However, this year standards in writing are not quite as strong as in reading and mathematics. This is partly because sometimes teachers do not make the most of opportunities to extend the most able pupils' writing in interesting and creative ways, especially in subjects other than English. At times, the task is too prescribed and this limits the amount of originality and flair pupils can bring to accomplishing the objective, for example in providing an account of the Great Fire of London.

The school has a well-justified reputation for success in sport – pupils participate in many clubs, and benefit from using the school's own indoor swimming pool. The rich curriculum builds on pupils' interests, including trips to places of interest and live performances such as 'STOMP' the musical. The school caters well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, ensuring that they understand British values and are well equipped for life in today's society.

The 'nurture group' is a new initiative to help pupils grow in confidence and develop their social skills. The small number of pupils who attend are already making new friendships and trying out new activities. The deputy headteacher ensures that the

needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well so that they make good progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school ensures that procedures are rigorous and that all children are kept safe. Leaders keep very careful records of their work. They work closely with outside agencies, parents and carers to ensure that pupils are protected. Training is thorough and up to date. All policies are followed to ensure that suitable people are employed to work with children. Leaders follow up any concerns about children's welfare assiduously. A monthly newsletter for staff keeps them abreast of best practice and reminds them of the school's very high expectations. The school's website contains much useful information for pupils and parents with helpful links to other organisations, especially around e-safety. All pupils have their own e-safety journal to remind them about how to use the internet safely.

Inspection findings

- At our initial meeting, we agreed together some key lines of enquiry to explore so that I could be satisfied that the school remains good. First of all, we considered progress and attainment in reading, as the outcomes in 2016 were below average. You recognised pupils' attainment and progress were disappointing in 2016. You attributed this to weaknesses in pupils' comprehension skills and a lack of stamina to complete the test.
- You introduced new approaches to teaching reading and promoting pupils' interest. They focused on developing pupils' ability to infer meaning from text and invested in new resources. Teachers asked each pupil in a reading group to take on a specific role such as asking questions or finding out the meaning of new words. New initiatives raised the profile of reading, such as the creation of attractive reading areas in each classroom and the encouragement of pupils to celebrate the books they had read. In key stage 2, teachers created 'caterpillars' across the walls, where each segment portrayed a pupil with a book they had enjoyed reading. Pupils who read to me were fluent and confident and able to talk about the books they enjoyed and answer questions about their reading.
- As a result of these steps to improve reading, progress has accelerated and standards have risen across the school. Hardly any pupils are below age-related expectations in reading.
- The second line of enquiry we agreed was how effectively leaders are spending the pupil premium to ensure that differences are reducing between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally. In the 2016 tests, disadvantaged pupils did not do as well as the others. We also agreed I should consider how well pupils from Forces families are doing, as they form a significant group within the school and also receive some additional government funding.
- Leaders and governors track the impact of pupil premium spending very closely. You review pupils' progress and attainment every half term. You hold teachers rigorously to account for how well the pupils are doing and ask them to identify the reasons why anybody is not keeping up with the others. The deputy

headteacher measures the impact of interventions meticulously to ensure value for money. Some have been discontinued, where the outcomes in pupils' performance were not evident.

- You keep careful records of how each pupil benefits from the use of the pupil premium, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. The school's internal data for current pupils shows that a high proportion of pupils are making good or better progress. Only a very few disadvantaged pupils are not at age-related expectations or above in reading and mathematics. There are a few more not doing so well in writing, but half of these have additional needs.
- As a result of the effective work with disadvantaged pupils, what differences remain with other pupils are reducing rapidly.
- Pupils from Forces families make the same good progress as other pupils, even though some of them have had a more interrupted education because of previous moves between countries. Some of these pupils missed out on a Reception Year, for example.
- The final key line of enquiry we agreed related to the attendance of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals. Their attendance has been below that of other groups of pupils.
- You track the attendance of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals very closely and work with families to support them in getting their children to school regularly. Some particular factors contributed to the low attendance last year, including pupils with complex medical conditions and the absence of pupils from Forces families for legitimate operational reasons. The school's attendance data for the current year shows that the attendance of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has much improved.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- attainment in writing increases to match that in reading and mathematics, including for disadvantaged pupils
- the most able pupils have more opportunities to present their work in interesting and creative ways that extend their learning.

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

Nick Butt
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other school leaders, the chair and vice-chair of governors, administrative staff and pupils. Short visits were made to all classrooms, where books were scrutinised. A range of documents, policies and assessment information was examined. Questionnaire responses from parents, pupils and staff were also considered.