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Mr Mike Fish
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Fish

Short inspection of Over Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 June 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

Despite some fluctuation in standards over time, the leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. In 2016, the results for Year 6 pupils at the end of key stage 2 were below the government's floor standards. To halt this decline in pupils' achievements you, your governors and staff have worked diligently to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and raise pupils' outcomes across the school. You have been ably supported by local authority advisers and staff from a nearby teaching school. Through appropriate training and the implementation of robust initiatives, you, governors, leaders and teachers have strengthened your leadership roles and responsibilities.

You and your governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Using this information, you have put in place well-focused plans to bring about rapid improvements this academic year. Rigorous monitoring shows that the new approaches are improving teaching and learning, which is impacting positively on pupils' progress and attainment across the school. Additionally, you are implementing more robust assessment systems to check carefully the progress of all groups of pupils. Consequently, you, your governors and leadership team now have a secure capacity to improve the school further.

The school is a vibrant, happy place where pupils talk positively about their learning. In lessons, pupils are keen to learn, are supportive of each other and

respond well to the various challenges they are set. Most pupils take care with the presentation of their work. Pupils show respect towards others and their behaviour around the school is usually good. Your recent review of behavioural management policies and procedures ensures that staff have the skills to deal with any behavioural incidents appropriately.

There have been many changes in staff since the last inspection, which have concerned some parents. However, you and your governors have managed these changes effectively. You support recently appointed teachers and those new to their career well through effective induction. A more robust performance management system is now in place which ensures leaders and teachers are more accountable for improving teaching and learning, and the progress pupils make.

Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve from their starting points. They understand what pupils need to know by the end of each academic year and key stage. You have tackled concerns from the previous inspection well. Leaders and teachers regularly undertake pupil progress meetings to check on pupils' progress and attainment. This identifies any pupils who are falling behind in their learning, so that targeted support can be implemented to support pupils' achievements. This is ensuring that all groups of pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Teachers give pupils clear explanations of their tasks, expect work at a good pace and plan effectively for the different ability groups.

Parents' views about the school vary. Most parents support the school and say that their children are happy and well cared for. However, a few parents expressed concerns about the quality of teaching and leadership, the decline in pupils' achievements and the lack of communication. As you strive to improve the school's leadership capacity, the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes this year, you and governors acknowledge that more needs to be done to form better communication links with parents.

The implementation of new teaching approaches, especially in mathematics, are leading to good teaching and learning which is improving pupils' achievements across the school. Year 2 and Year 6 teacher assessments indicate increases in the proportions of pupils reaching age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. School assessment information also shows that more pupils are reaching the higher standard in reading at the end of both key stages and in mathematics at Year 6. However, you acknowledge that the new strategies need to impact on pupils' outcomes over time and more pupils need to reach a greater depth in writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. You and your governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and records are detailed and of a high quality. All staff and governors receive appropriate training to understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe.

You ensure that staff record all incidents and concerns effectively. This allows you to remain vigilant about pupils' safety and well-being. When required, you use the information gathered to make appropriate referrals to external agencies, and work effectively with these groups to secure better care for pupils.

Pupils have good relationships with staff. They feel safe knowing that there is an adult available who they can share their worries with, and who will resolve any incidents effectively. Pupils are knowledgeable about staying safe; they know how to keep safe online and in the wider community.

Pupils' attendance is carefully monitored and is improving. Previously, those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities had a high rate of absence. The special educational needs coordinator and the pupil well-being mentor work together. They support parents to improve their child's attendance. This is enabling significant improvement in attendance for some individuals.

Inspection findings

- To ascertain that the school remained good my first line of enquiry was about mathematics. This is because in 2016 the progress Year 6 pupils made at the end of key stage 2 was in the lowest 10% nationally, and too few pupils reached the expected and higher standards. Additionally, the proportion of pupils who met age-related expectations in mathematics at the end of key stage 1 was below that seen nationally, and some pupils had not made the progress they should from the end of the Reception year.
- Recent professional development has enabled teachers to challenge pupils' mathematical thinking by focusing on calculations and reasoning skills, which is developing pupils' depth of understanding. These strategies are enabling most pupils to make good progress in mathematics this academic year from their starting points. I found that pupils complete interesting activities that meet their needs through well-planned challenges. I could see that the new teaching, learning and assessment strategies are improving the progress pupils make this academic year, enabling more of them to reach age-related expectations and the higher levels across the school.
- The next line of enquiry looked into the quality of reading and writing in key stage 1. This is because in 2016 too few pupils met age-related expectations in these subjects at the end of Year 2. Additionally, some middle-attaining pupils did not make enough progress in reading and writing, especially middle-attaining boys in reading. Pupils are now regularly developing their comprehension and inference skills to help them understand appropriate texts. Teachers ensure that pupils are reading books at the right level of challenge and that books interest both boys and girls. This is encouraging pupils' enjoyment of reading and increasing the proportion of them reaching the expected and higher standards in key stage 1. Middle-attaining pupils, including boys, are now making improved progress in their reading skills.
- My observations of English books in Years 1 and 2 show that most pupils are developing their writing skills well, including middle-attaining pupils. A larger

proportion are on track to reach age-related expectations at the end of this year. Pupils use a good range of vocabulary and punctuation while recording work, which is often linked to other subjects. They are using their knowledge of phonics to support their spelling. However, I saw too few opportunities for pupils to write at length for different purposes, to enable a higher proportion of the most able pupils to reach greater depth.

- My third line of enquiry considered the progress that disadvantaged pupils are making, to see if you and your governors spend the school's pupil premium funding effectively. This is because in 2016 too few disadvantaged pupils did as well as others nationally. We also discussed their attendance which had been low last year. The pupil premium leader and teachers identify the barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged pupils effectively. Through careful planning, appropriate support is provided so that these pupils develop their academic, social and behavioural skills well. Disadvantaged pupils are now making good progress across the school from their various starting points. The pupil premium leader also checks and supports the attendance of these pupils. Her work is improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Effective monitoring by the pupil premium governor ensures that the pupil premium funding is spent effectively.
- Lastly, I investigated if children make good progress from their starting points in the early years and how the outside learning area is used to enhance pupils' learning. The latter was an area for development at the previous inspection. Together, we observed the stimulating learning environment inside and outside. We watched children enjoying their various activities related to weddings, in preparation for a wedding in the local church. Children showed good concentration and worked collaboratively, making wedding cards, wrapping presents and having bridesmaid fittings. Previous work about pirates displayed on walls showed good-quality writing from both boys and girls, who were using their phonological knowledge to support their spelling.
- The new early years leader is an effective leader. She ensures that the outside area extends pupils' skills and understanding for all areas of learning. We saw a small group of boys outside, developing their mathematical skills and language by counting and measuring the height of plastic bricks as they built a tall tower with adult support. Evidence shows that all groups of children are making good progress from their various starting points and their learning is enhanced by the exciting opportunities offered in the outside environment. Additionally, recent local authority moderation confirms that assessment in the early years is accurate and that standards remain above national expectations.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans to further strengthen the new approaches to the teaching of mathematics are fully implemented, so that pupils continue to make at least good progress and standards continue to rise across the school over time
- teachers provide more opportunities for all pupils, especially the most able, to write at length in a greater variety of writing styles to ensure a higher proportion

reach greater depth

- they improve communication links with parents.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Harrison
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

- I met with you, senior and middle leaders, governors and two representatives of the local authority.
- I listened to Year 2 pupils reading and spoke with a group of pupils.
- I looked at a range of documentation including information about the school's self-evaluation, plans for future improvement and a letter from the regional schools commissioner.
- I examined policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils including mandatory checks and case studies about referrals made to external agencies.
- I visited all classrooms with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher to observe pupils' learning and scrutinise the work in pupils' books.
- I took account of the views of 14 staff, 47 pupils and 53 parents who responded to Ofsted's online surveys. Parental views from the free-text service were also considered as well as a letter from a parent.
- The school is working with the Cambridge Primary Education Trust.