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Mr Steven Walker
Headteacher
Redlands Primary and Nursery School
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Dear Mr Walker

Short inspection of Redlands Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 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. You were appointed as permanent headteacher in February 2017 after serving as acting headteacher for a year. You and the two deputy headteachers quickly and accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Work to build on strengths and tackle weaknesses had already begun at the time of this inspection and there is already evidence of improvement over the last year. You have been well supported by a new chair of the governing body. In the words of one of your parents, 'Children are lucky to be at such a positive school with a very caring and extremely encouraging ethos.' Your ambition that Redlands is a place where 'children come first' is evident.

The pupils' conduct is excellent. In lessons, they are keen to do well. They are provided with a wide range of different activities to stimulate their interest and support their learning. Leaders are ambitious for more than academic success and are determined to maintain a wide and varied curriculum.

You also emphasise the importance of play. There is an impressive range of play equipment for breaktimes. Additional staff engage the pupils in activities such as space hoppers, ball games and climbing. Sport is an important feature of school life. The school hosts a table-tennis centre for pupils and the community. You are proud of the school's track record for sporting excellence. You are aware, though, that not all pupils love sport and have already appointed specialists in art and music for next year. Both younger and older pupils have opportunities for a residential experience.

Leaders and governors ensure that disadvantaged pupils can benefit with careful use of the additional pupil premium funding.

Since the last inspection, the governing body has developed a much better understanding of how it can check on pupils' learning. Governors are confident when interpreting information about pupils' attainment and progress. They ensure that they visit the school regularly so that they can talk with staff and pupils, and see the work of the school for themselves. They describe this as a 'two-way relationship' which helps them know where weaknesses lie and what to put in place. Governors and leaders were aware that the school's website lacked some key information but have been slow to ensure that everything is up to date.

You and other staff have embarked on a rigorous programme of training to ensure that activities and teachers' feedback match the needs of the pupils. You have engaged external support from a consultant and from strong partner schools. This has focused on providing challenge for the pupils in mathematics and on ensuring that boys, particularly, are supported and inspired to write skilfully and accurately by the time they leave the school. You have made a good start with this. Pupil premium funding has been used effectively to support reading and for other focused work.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have detailed knowledge of the pupils in your school and the difficulties some of them face. As the school's designated safeguarding officer, you have ensured that staff are trained and they know what to do if they are concerned that a child is being harmed. Recruitment procedures are secure. Only two leaders have been trained in 'safer recruitment' but other leaders and governors plan to add to this number soon. Training refreshers are planned to sharpen staff input, for example to ensure that all checks are recorded quickly and staff are prepared for all eventualities.

The school's safeguarding policy is up to date and takes account of the most recent legislation. You ensure that safeguarding records are securely stored. You have a detailed knowledge of the school's work with other agencies to ensure that each individual child is protected. Where necessary, you take persistent and decisive action so that vulnerable pupils are not forgotten. Your response to pupils potentially missing from education is a strong feature.

Pupils say that they feel safe and are able to tell an adult if they need help. Every parent who contributed to the inspection survey agreed with this. One said, 'I know that when I leave my child he is well looked after and safe.' Pupils have been taught to keep themselves safe. Internet safety, drugs education, emotional security and safety on roads and in the school building are examples of what the school covers. Pupils often take the lead in ensuring that they are as safe as possible – ticketing cars outside the school with the support of local police.

Inspection findings

- Leaders, other teachers and teaching assistants have undertaken considerable training already this year to increase the challenge in mathematics learning. They are now using reasoning and problem-solving activities, particularly for the more able pupils. Pupils are increasingly successful with these challenges. This approach is new for staff and for the older pupils. The school's assessment information shows that pupils are making better progress as a result. Boys, particularly, are now reaching the highest standards in greater numbers. The challenges offered, however, are limited in style with most being harder word problems rather than activities designed to deepen and develop pupils' understanding. They are also only targeted at pupils on the more demanding 'green' and 'purple' tasks. Teachers' written feedback is precise, identifying what the pupil has done well, but does not extend to questions to develop pupils' understanding.
- Leaders have already identified that boys' writing was not reaching the same standards as girls' writing. You have consulted with boys and introduced a wider range of reading materials to inspire them and model skilful writing. An emphasis on improving phonics knowledge for the younger children is making a difference – the gap between boys and girls is closing. The school has employed teaching assistants who speak Polish and Romanian to provide further support for new arrivals whose English is not secure. Older boys take pride in their writing and talk with confidence about their accurate use of different types of punctuation and writing devices. Their writing is improving but relies on direction from the teacher or teaching assistant to use three adjectives, for example. These pupils do not yet have an independent sophistication in style. Leaders are confident that their checks on progress are leading to improved writing for both boys and girls – evidence seen suggests that they are right. Writing activities are now varied and interesting, and the writing seen demonstrates increasing security as the pupils move through the school.
- Attendance has been consistently better overall than national averages since the last inspection and persistent absence has been low. In 2016, a small group of pupils with special educational needs missed a lot of school and so leaders have focused on the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities carefully this year. There has been improvement already, despite the need for some extended absence due to medical needs.
- A new special educational needs coordinator is keeping track of the progress made by these pupils and they are making secure progress from their starting points, which are quite low for some pupils. Interventions, the school's overall provision and the use of funding are carefully monitored so that they can be adjusted as needs emerge. Teaching assistants support learning in classrooms well because the purpose of each lesson is clear.
- You have worked effectively to engage parents in the work of the school and they already say they appreciate your 'visible, positive presence' every morning. Many aspects of communication with parents are very successful, such as 'Marvellous Me' and the new online learning journal in the early years.

- Governors are also taking effective steps to be visible in school. The school's website, however, does not provide easy access to all the information needed by parents and other readers. The school has not had a systematic approach to ensuring that all documentation is up to date with the most recent legislation and other changes. Information is not easily found in one place. As a result, leaders and the governing body have not ensured that the school publishes the required information. This was corrected during the course of the inspection but omissions are likely to arise again unless governors and leaders develop a more reliable approach to this aspect of communication.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide a wider range of challenging activities to deepen and develop understanding so that more girls and boys reach the highest standards by the end of key stage 2
- staff build on the strong start to language development and phonics knowledge for younger children to support increasing security, independence and sophistication of language use towards the end of key stage 2, to improve the standard of boys' writing
- they maintain all of the required information on the school's website and in school, making sure that all school policies and paperwork are up to date, fit for purpose and easy to find.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanne Ward
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I considered information from a range of sources, including the previous inspection report and information about the school's performance in 2014, 2015 and 2016. I also reviewed the school's website and read its published policies. I spoke with parents as they brought their children to school and also considered the 32 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. I read the results of other Ofsted surveys from 31 staff and 55 pupils. Meetings were held with you, the two deputy headteachers, governors and the special educational needs coordinator to discuss the school's progress since the last inspection. I considered a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document and improvement plan, impact reports from partnership work, information kept in school about pupils'

attainment and progress, the single central record of the checks on staff and volunteers, a sample of recruitment files, the safeguarding policy and records of actions taken to protect pupils' welfare. I looked at records of staff training to ensure that they were up to date. I talked with a group of staff and individual staff to make sure they knew what to do if they were concerned about a child. We jointly made short visits to lessons, looked at the quality of work in pupils' books and spoke with pupils about their learning. I met formally with a group of pupils to look at their writing and hear their views. I observed pupils' behaviour around school, in class and at lunchtime.