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Gail Barnshaw
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Barnshaw

Short inspection of Hunsbury Park Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 18 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 November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Pupils continue to make good progress. This includes the high proportions of pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, many of whom start at the school with knowledge and skills well below those typical for their age.

You are well respected and have successfully promoted a 'can-do' ethos at the school, which staff and pupils have embraced. You have maintained the considerable strengths noted at the last inspection, particularly in terms of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are happy, confident and proud of the school. They are taught to follow the school's positive behaviour promise, to 'be kind, safe and responsible'. Pupils say that the school is full of 'happy and smiling people'. Parents and pupils appreciate the warm, caring and inclusive environment which you have created.

Leaders have worked successfully to tackle the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. You provide effective training for all staff that is linked to whole-school developments. We saw together that all staff are consistent in their application of school systems and policies. Both of these are helping to improve the progress which pupils make during their time at the school. Staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey said that they feel valued and appreciate the professional support and training provided for them.

You have made developing pupils' writing a whole-school priority and provided additional training for staff. Teachers make sure that pupils have a clear understanding of the features of different types of writing and how to plan and organise their work by providing them with writing 'toolkits'. Teachers consistently emphasise the importance of using correct grammar to pupils; this is helping pupils to improve their writing.

Through their work with other schools and the local authority, teachers now have a better understanding of what pupils need to do to achieve the expected standard and greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics. They have started to introduce 'chilli' challenge tasks into lessons, where pupils can choose tasks of increasing difficulty from mild, to hot, to spicy. These, however, are not yet consistently used to ensure that the most able pupils reach the standards of which they are capable. Leaders acknowledge that the proportion of pupils who reach the greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics across the school is not high enough. You have rightly identified this as an area for development on your school improvement plan for next year.

There are high proportions of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities at the school. Many of these pupils fall into both categories and start at the school with skills much lower than those typical for their age, particularly in speech and language. Leaders have put in place bespoke and one-to-one support for pupils to remedy this. Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has risen. Evidence in pupils' books supports the school's current information that the difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is diminishing. You have identified that pupils' vocabulary is not sufficiently well developed to raise further the attainment of all pupils.

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. A recent audit of the school's procedures and practices by the local authority has resulted in further improvements to the care and protection of pupils. All required checks on staff are carried out and recorded carefully. Leaders, governors and staff undertake regular and up-to-date training on child protection and safeguarding issues. All staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities to ensure children's safety and well-being. The files you showed me indicate that staff make prompt referrals when they have any concerns. Leaders are tenacious in seeking and pursuing external support when needed. You and the staff 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 protected characteristics. Pupils spoke maturely about how they had learned about racism, so that they could understand why it happens and therefore stop it.

You have explained, in language pupils can understand, potential dangers and how pupils can keep themselves safe. All pupils who I spoke with said that they feel safe at school and knew a number of strategies to help them stay safe online. Leaders have also run information evenings for parents to help them understand potential dangers online and therefore better protect their children.

Pupils said that bullying is extremely rare but, if it does happen, they have complete confidence in staff to deal with it quickly and effectively. They explained how they used the school's 'worry box' to notify staff if they have any concerns about anything and that these concerns are always responded to promptly. For example, pupils in Year 6 said that their anxieties about going to secondary school had been quickly dealt with and they were now looking forward to going.

Inspection findings

- You have strengthened leadership at the school by the recent appointment of two new deputy headteachers and three special educational needs coordinators. Senior leaders 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 improvement plan for the school, designed to maximise pupils' progress. The plan is known and understood by all.
- The well-resourced designated special provision unit at the school provides support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This unit also provides additional care and nurturing for any pupil who needs it. All pupils are supported to remove any barriers to their learning and to help them participate in lessons. Pupils' confidence and enjoyment of school improve dramatically as a result of the excellent care and provision which they receive here. Evidence in pupils' books shows that they make good progress in their learning.
- The governing body provides leaders with effective support and challenge. Governors keep their skills up to date with regular training. The governing body makes sure that additional funding is used effectively to have a positive impact on pupils' well-being and progress. For example, pupil premium funding has been successfully used to provide a breakfast club, an additional teacher for Year 6 and a learning mentor to work with disadvantaged pupils and their families.
- Leaders ensure that pupils who speak English as an additional language are given additional support to help them access the curriculum. The school provides information to parents which is translated into their home language. Evidence in pupils' books shows that they make good progress.
- You have ensured that there is an effective assessment and tracking system in place, which provides you with a clear analysis of the attainment and progress of each individual pupil and of groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You regularly review pupils' progress to ensure that any pupil who is falling behind receives timely support to catch up. Teachers have worked with staff in other local schools and the local authority to ensure that their assessments are accurate. Teachers

use assessment information to plan learning that takes most pupils on from what they already know and can do.

- Leaders have introduced a new whole-school approach to teaching mathematics. This includes more opportunities for pupils to practise their problem-solving and reading skills and to secure their basic number skills. We saw together pupils in Year 4 thoroughly enjoying working together as 'mathematical detectives' to solve a mystery at the town carnival. Leaders have also provided workshops, videos and resource packs for parents, to help them support their child's learning at home.
- Teachers and pupils have positive relationships, and pupils willingly follow their teacher's instructions in lessons. Classrooms are attractive; displays celebrate pupils' work and provide them with helpful prompts and examples of how to make their work better. Pupils say that they enjoy learning because teachers make work fun and support them to do their best. Pupils also work well together to support each other's learning. They have a good understanding of their duty as British citizens to protect the natural world. For example, they said that they enjoy sharing work with their parents through the class 'Dojo', because they know about the threat of deforestation and therefore want to reduce unnecessary use of paper.
- Pupils' attendance has been below the national average for the last three years. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are absent from school more often than other pupils. This is mainly due to serious medical reasons and pupils whose parents take holidays during term time. Through publishing weekly attendance figures, celebrating good attendance and challenging absences promptly, leaders are taking all possible steps to maximise pupils' attendance. All pupils who I spoke with clearly understood the importance of good attendance and found the weekly 'best class attendance' certificate motivational in helping them to be in school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers continue to support pupils to extend their vocabulary and develop its use
- all teachers consistently provide suitable challenge for the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, so that more pupils achieve the greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school.

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 met with you and the two deputy headteachers, and shared my key lines of enquiry. I also met with the three special educational needs coordinators and some governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with parents before school and met with a group of pupils in key stage 2 to talk about their experiences at school. You and I visited all classes, examined pupils' books and talked with pupils to evaluate the quality of their learning. We also looked at a sample of pupils' books from different year groups. In addition, I scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the school's record of 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 its improvement plans. I took account of the 12 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 12 responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text service. I also considered the 48 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. There were no responses from pupils to Ofsted's online survey to take into consideration.