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Mrs Andrea Cassius
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Dear Mrs Cassius

Short inspection of Suffolks Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 September 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 previous inspection. You and your team have a secure knowledge of the strengths and weakness of the school. You use assessment information, external reports and leaders' evaluations to drive further improvement. Since your appointment as headteacher in January 2013, you have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Governors visit the school regularly and receive clear information from leaders, so they understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The newly appointed chair is an experienced governor and local leader of governance. She is undertaking a review of the governors' skills and competences before recruiting additional governors. Governors are ambitious for the school and are confident in asking the right questions about school performance and proposed changes.

Members of your team have defined roles and are able to talk about the school and their plans for improvement. You have identified teachers who have leadership potential and have given them increased responsibility. For example, there is new leadership of mathematics and reading. Leaders have brought about greater consistency in practice within the school.

Leaders work as a cohesive team. For example, all subject leaders are working towards a common goal to improve the quality of pupils' reading, 'to ensure a cross-curriculum approach to reading that promotes no opportunity missed'.

Leaders have improved the early years outdoor learning area to provide a rich learning environment for young children. Additionally, they have improved the playground area throughout the school to support pupils' physical development and exercise.

Most children begin school with below-average skills and knowledge. As a result of focused teaching, children make good progress through the early years and most are meeting the expected standard when they move into Year 1.

The quality of teaching and learning in key stage 1 is good. Pupils continue to build on their prior learning and make progress, with the proportion achieving the expected standard at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics being similar to national averages. Pupils' outcomes in key stage 2 have been less consistent, particularly in reading.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. You ensure that the systems and procedures in place are continually reviewed and kept up to date, including training for staff and governors. During recent training, staff reviewed case studies, helping them to understand better their role in keeping children safe. The checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are carried out with care and diligence.

Staff raise any concerns promptly and leaders draw on advice from external agencies appropriately to safeguard vulnerable pupils. The pastoral care team is tenacious and systematic in following up referrals to social care. They provide advice and guidance to children and families on how to stay healthy and safe, and about emotional and mental health.

Governors are mindful of their statutory responsibilities and the designated safeguarding governor regularly visits the school. As a result of a governors' audit, gate security procedures were strengthened to safeguard pupils from leaving the school during the school day.

Pupils consider the school to be a safe place. Pupils I interviewed told me that they are very happy at school and they feel safe. They told me that the school teaches them to be safe and they know whom to go to if they are worried. Parents agree that their children are safe and well looked after in school.

Inspection findings

- The first area we agreed to explore through the inspection was how well pupils are making progress in reading in key stage 2. In 2016, the proportion of pupils in Year 6 reaching the expected standard in the reading assessment was lower than the national average.
- You have introduced a new approach to teaching reading and we looked in particular at Year 6. Teachers assess pupils carefully to find out the reading skills they still need to learn, and plan accordingly. Questioning is used well to challenge pupils to think more deeply about the text they are reading. In lessons observed in Year 6, teachers focused

on developing pupils' skills in understanding the meaning of text and of unfamiliar words. Pupils quickly gained confidence in using and understanding new words.

- These actions are raising pupils' attainment, with assessments showing a higher proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the 2017 reading assessment for Year 6 pupils. However, although improvement is taking place, there is still more to do.
- The second area of focus for the inspection was to evaluate the impact of the school's actions to improve the teaching of mathematics in key stage 2. In both 2016 and 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching or exceeding the expected standard in mathematics at the end of key stage 1 was similar to the national average. However, in key stage 2, although the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was close to the national average, a lower proportion than nationally reached the higher level.
- New ways of assessing pupils at the start and end of each sequence of lessons are helping teachers plan learning activities that are better matched to pupils' attainment. Additionally, the curriculum has been redesigned, with greater emphasis on fluency in applying mathematics.
- There are some signs of improvement in pupils' progress. Pupils showed growing confidence in their learning and were beginning to explain the processes they had used. However, teachers' questioning is still not used consistently well to challenge pupils to think more deeply about mathematics and use mathematical language to explain their reasoning.
- Although assessment information indicates that a higher proportion of pupils are now reaching the higher standard in mathematics, this is inconsistent across year groups through key stage 2.
- The next area we identified for review is the effectiveness of the school's work to improve pupils' attendance. This was because the number of pupils persistently missing school was high compared to national averages in 2016. Leaders are relentless in promoting positive attitudes to regular attendance. You have identified pupils who are at risk of absence and have implemented a strategy to promote and reward regular attendance. You communicate this well to parents and the community through the newsletters, website and 'Amazing Attendance' displays.
- In particular, the school has been working with the families of children who are persistently absent from school. You meet regularly with these families and together find ways for children to come to school more often. This has been successful, with the number of pupils regularly missing school decreasing over the past year. You and your team continue to work with parents and the local authority education welfare service to improve attendance further. You have set ambitious targets for the school.
- Finally, we looked at the trend in the number of pupils excluded by the school. In 2015, the number of exclusions was higher than the average for all schools and this has increased over the last three years.
- Behaviour observed around the school is good. The pupils move in an orderly way around the school and listen to the instructions given by adults. During lessons pupils responded quickly and quietly to instructions.
- Leaders work hard to make sure that the school is inclusive and that pupils are safe and well cared for in school. The quality and timeliness of the support provided led to a

reduction of exclusions in 2016/17 and currently no children are at risk of exclusion.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvements in the teaching of reading are sustained across key stage 2 so that all groups of pupils, including the most able, attain the standard of which they are capable
- teachers' questioning challenges pupils to think deeply in their application of mathematical knowledge and skills.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Knowles
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders, as well as three members of the governing body. Together with leaders, I visited lessons and reviewed work in pupils' books. I spoke informally with parents before school as well as considering the 32 responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents. I met with pupils and also spoke to pupils during lessons and in the playground. I listened to individual pupils read from Years 4 and 6. I reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and information about pupils' progress and attendance. Information related to safeguarding was also reviewed, including school records, policies and procedures and the single central record of recruitment checks. I scrutinised the school's website and confirmed that it meets the requirements on the publication of specified information.