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Mrs Suzanne Ricketts
Headteacher
New Cangle Community Primary School
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Dear Mrs Ricketts

Short inspection of New Cangle Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 31 October 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 June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. The previous headteacher retired in August 2015 and you were appointed as the school's new headteacher in February 2016. Your deputy headteacher took up her post in September 2016. The local authority issued the school with a notice of concern in September 2016, as a result of weaknesses in the school's published data.

You and the governors took prompt and decisive action to address the local authority's concerns. You were supported well by a local authority officer and the notice was removed in December 2016. You have done a great deal to improve the quality of teaching in the school and it is very clear that standards are now rising once again. The school is a calm and orderly place that pupils enjoy coming to, and where learning is interesting and fun.

Parents are positive about the school. The vast majority who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said that they would recommend the school to others. Many parents chose to leave additional text comments in support of the school. Similarly, results of the pupil and staff surveys were almost entirely positive.

After a turbulent period where standards fell, the school is now clearly back on track and outcomes are improving once again. You and the deputy headteacher are a strong and effective team and there is clear evidence of the impact of your work. You have started to share leadership responsibilities more widely and there are

early signs of the effectiveness of other leaders too. You have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. We agreed that there is work still to do to improve pupils' outcomes in writing and to ensure that more disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The single central record of pre-employment checks is well maintained and meets statutory requirements. It reflects the school's thorough approach to ensuring that only suitable people are employed to work with children.

You and the special educational needs coordinator have been suitably trained for the role of designated safeguarding lead. You both show a good understanding of the role and know the action to take to protect children. Records of child protection concerns show that appropriate action is taken in a timely manner when necessary. Pupils feel safe at school and say that there is little bullying.

Inspection findings

- In order to check that the school remains good, I followed a number of lines of enquiry. Firstly, I looked at pupils' writing because, although pupils make similar progress to others nationally, their attainment is below the national average.
- You are fully aware that pupils' attainment in writing is weaker than in other subjects. Many pupils' exercise books show underdeveloped handwriting, with some messy and careless work. Simple, common words are frequently and repeatedly spelt incorrectly. We agreed that pupils are given too few opportunities to practise writing independently.
- You have already identified that the school's marking and feedback policy is not helping pupils to improve their work. Teachers are spending a great deal of time and effort marking pupils' work in detail, but this is not having the desired impact on improving their writing. You and the teaching staff are currently reviewing the policy.
- 'Cold' and 'hot' tasks were introduced to improve assessment. That is, pupils now write an unaided piece at the beginning of a topic and another at the end, once they have had teaching input. Although these assessments often show improvement in terms of pupils' progress in a particular genre of writing, this is to the detriment of the development of their basic writing skills. For example, a pupil might demonstrate a better understanding of how to write a non-chronological report while continuing to struggle with simple punctuation.
- My second line of enquiry was around mathematics. Although published information showed improvement, key stage 2 pupils' attainment remained below the national average in 2017. The proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in mathematics improved greatly between 2016 and 2017.
- Improving outcomes in mathematics was your major focus during the previous academic year. This focus has been successful, and improvements are clear. The

'cold' and 'hot' approach was also introduced in mathematics and has been much more successful in this subject than in writing. Teachers use the 'cold' tasks diagnostically so that they are able to focus closely on the areas where pupils need most help. Teachers plan work for pupils that is at the right level for their current stage of development, including for the most able pupils. Pupils' progress and attainment are improving as a result of the actions taken.

- The third area I looked at was whether disadvantaged pupils throughout the school are making the progress that they should. I chose to look at this area because the published data for 2017 shows that disadvantaged pupils made much less progress than expected between the end of key stage 1 and the end of key stage 2.
- You had concerns about provision for disadvantaged pupils as soon as you took over as headteacher. You took prompt action and a full pupil premium review was carried out in November 2016. The deputy headteacher now has responsibility for this important area and it is clear that the review's recommendations are being acted upon in a timely fashion. You, the deputy headteacher and the school's governors are very ambitious for this group of pupils and are determined that they will do well. This is reflected clearly in the very rapid progress that disadvantaged pupils in the 2017 Year 6 cohort made during their final year at the school.
- The final area that I looked at was attendance. The most recent published data showed that overall rates of absence and persistent absence were above average. The absence of pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was particularly high.
- Attendance is given an appropriately high priority at New Cangle. Strong systems are in place to ensure that pupils' absences are noticed and followed up quickly. A good range of suitable measures are in place both to tackle unacceptable absence and to reward regular attendance. Families are provided with the support they need to help them to fulfil their legal responsibility to bring their children to school on time every day. As a result, overall absence is now average and no groups of pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make rapid progress so that their attainment catches up with that of other pupils
- basic skills, such as spelling and handwriting, are taught more effectively, and pupils are given more opportunities to write independently, so that attainment in writing is at least as good as the average.

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

Yours sincerely

Wendy Varney
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other leaders and two governors. I observed teaching and learning, jointly with you and the deputy headteacher. I met with the school council and spoke with pupils in their classrooms. I took into account the 31 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 28 free-text comments from parents. I scrutinised a range of school documents and looked at pupils' exercise books.