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Rachel Surch
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Dear Mrs Surch

Short inspection of Red Oaks Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 November 2017 with Andrew Brown, Ofsted Inspector, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As headteacher, you provide strong leadership and demonstrate a clear and determined vision for the school. You are ably supported by a highly skilled leadership team and a proactive and knowledgeable governing body. Together, leaders demonstrate a steely determination that all pupils in the school, regardless of need, will achieve their potential and be well prepared for the next stage of their education. Red Oaks is a highly inclusive school where pupils with a wide range of needs are fully integrated into school life. This is appreciated by pupils and parents alike and, during our visit, it was clear that inclusion is seen as the norm.

Leaders, including governors, have an accurate and detailed view of the school's strengths as well as areas that need further development. This is as a result of robust monitoring systems and a precise tracking of pupils' outcomes. Information is gathered from a range of sources and then used skilfully to inform future provision. You have ensured that Red Oaks is an outward-looking school, which is constantly reviewing its practices. You provided evidence that the school continues to work with a range of external providers to check the quality of provision and provide training for staff where this is required.

Children are firmly at the heart of the school's work. This was clear from our discussions with pupils as well as from our evaluations of your plans for further developments. A clear strength of the school is its learning environment. This is

vibrant, creative and engaging. A visual celebration of pupils' achievement instils in them a sense of pride and motivates them in further learning.

The vast majority of parents who completed the online survey would recommend the school to other parents. One parent, summing up the view of many, wrote, 'Red Oaks is a school where every child is treated equally. They go the extra mile to include parents with children's learning and push the child to achieve their very best.'

The previous inspection identified the need for leaders to provide greater opportunities for the most able pupils to challenge themselves at a high level. The school has worked hard to develop pupils' independence, and this had led to pupils of all abilities taking more responsibility for their own learning. Work in pupils' books demonstrates that the most able pupils are given activities that challenge them at the higher levels and provide opportunities for pupils to apply their understanding across a range of subjects.

Safeguarding is effective.

Together with the designated safeguarding lead, you have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The impact of the school's work in keeping children safe is under constant review. Governors keep a watchful eye over the implementation of school procedures and engage the services of an external consultant to validate this work.

Leaders have created a culture of care and vigilance and are committed to ensuring that pupils feel safe, both physically and emotionally. Staff and governors have received comprehensive training, including on female genital mutilation, preventing radicalisation and children missing education. Staff are clear about what to do if they have any concerns about pupils' safety or well-being. Records show that referrals are followed up swiftly and leaders have established effective partnerships with a range of external agencies.

Pupils said that they feel safe in school. One pupil told an inspector, 'Everyone's happy and children are kind to each other.' They said that bullying sometimes happens but are confident that, if they have concerns, they can tell an adult and it will be sorted out for them. Effective systems are in place to gather the views of all pupils in the school, including those who find communication more difficult. The vast majority of parents responding to Parent View agree that their child is safe at school. This is also reflected in the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed the main areas we would focus on. Firstly, we looked at how leaders are ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make the progress they are capable of from their different starting points. Published data for the 2017 national tests indicated that, although the progress made by these pupils was broadly in line with national averages, attainment at the end of

early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 was lower for disadvantaged pupils than for all pupils nationally. With this in mind, I particularly wanted to explore the impact that disadvantaged pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is having on assessment information.

- My discussions with leaders and governors demonstrated that the school knows its pupils very well, including those eligible for pupil premium funding. You have put in place rigorous systems to track their academic progress, and these are used extremely effectively to identify where additional support is required. Where interventions are used, these are closely monitored to evaluate the impact they are having on pupils' learning. Expenditure is also closely monitored by governors and leaders to ensure value for money as well as an equity of provision for all eligible pupils.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school who also have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than that found nationally, and this is lowering average attainment for the disadvantaged group as a whole. However, assessment information that you provided indicates that disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress from their starting points. This is supported by inspection evidence, including a detailed scrutiny of the work in pupils' books.
- In the 2017 national assessment tests, the proportion of Year 6 pupils working at greater depth in writing was below the national average. Therefore, our second line of enquiry was to look at how leaders are ensuring that greater proportions of key stage 2 pupils are being challenged to write at greater depth.
- Leaders have identified this as a priority, and developments are already in place. Detailed analysis of pupils' attainment has identified the elements of the curriculum that pupils find more challenging, for example, shifts in formality. Changes have been made to ensure that current pupils are supported in addressing these challenges. Other areas that leaders have identified include the need for pupils to be exposed to a greater range of rich vocabulary and for pupils to apply their knowledge of grammar and punctuation more appropriately for different genres and audiences. Staff have received training to develop their subject knowledge, and work in books demonstrates that pupils are provided with opportunities to apply their writing skills across a range of subjects. However, we agreed that recent developments in the teaching of writing at greater depth now need to be embedded across the school so that they impact fully on pupils' outcomes.
- Our next line of enquiry was to evaluate how teaching in key stage 1 is enabling pupils to make strong progress from their starting points at the end of early years. Assessment information in 2016 had highlighted some underachievement for pupils at the end of Year 2. In 2017, attainment was broadly in line with national averages, but I wanted to see whether this represented strong progress for these pupils.
- A detailed scrutiny of key stage 1 books for this academic year and for 2016–17 demonstrated that the vast majority of pupils make good progress from their starting points. Teachers have a secure understanding of what pupils can do and what they need to learn next in order to progress. This leads to work which is accurately matched to pupils' needs. In mathematics, pupils of all abilities are

given regular opportunities to apply their understanding through well-structured reasoning and problem-solving activities. However, we agreed that these now need to lead to greater proportions of pupils, not just those with high prior attainment, being assessed as working at greater depth by the end of Year 2.

- Our final line of enquiry was to evaluate the school's provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. During our visit, one of the most striking features of the school was its inclusivity. For example, all pupils learn British sign language. It is used in assemblies, productions and the oral retelling of stories in writing lessons. Staff in all phases of the school exhibit high expectations and are highly skilled at getting the best out of pupils who have additional needs. Targets are aspirational and build on what pupils can already do. This is ensuring that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress towards their targets. This is the case for mainstream pupils as well as those in the specialist resource bases.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that developments in teaching, learning and assessment are fully embedded so that greater proportions of pupils are working above the standards expected for their age.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Dyer
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and other members of your senior leadership team. We discussed the school's self-evaluation, information about pupils' progress and improvements made since the previous inspection. Together with leaders, inspectors observed pupils in classrooms and spoke to them about their learning. We analysed work in pupils' books from across the curriculum and heard a number of pupils read.

Inspectors had meetings with senior leaders and five governors, including the chair of governors. I also met with an officer from the local authority. We looked at a range of written evidence, including documents relating to safeguarding and attendance. I took account of the views expressed by 85 parents who completed the online survey as well as their written comments. The results of staff and pupil questionnaires were also considered.