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Mr Havard Spring
Headteacher
Foresters Primary School
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Dear Mr Spring

Short inspection of Foresters Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 November 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You have worked closely with senior leaders and governors to ensure that the school is an inclusive, welcoming and happy place. For example, pupils are rightly proud of the way the school supports those who attend its specialist provision for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). One pupil explained that sometimes he sees things differently to others, but he is still friends with the other children; another pupil responded that 'sometimes it's good to see things a different way, so it's a bit special to be able to do that'. You have worked hard to develop such positive, inclusive attitudes and these are evident in the school's values and daily practice. Parents praised the school's strong sense of community. They like the way 'everyone is valued' and feel their children are safe and well cared for.

You have worked on the areas identified at the time of the previous inspection. You have developed more opportunities for pupils to participate actively in lessons; pupils are particularly positive about the emphasis now given to investigating and experimenting in science lessons. Pupils also benefit from more opportunities to talk to each other, sharing ideas and opinions in lessons and explaining their reasoning to each other; this is a particular strength in mathematics in upper key stage 2. The school has also invested in equipment for information and communication technology (ICT) which is helping to ensure that pupils have opportunities to research and find things out for themselves. The recent focus on writing, spelling and punctuation across the school has had a positive impact on end-of-key-stage outcomes. The school rightly continues to prioritise this aspect of its work, to improve outcomes for pupils still further.

Members of the strong governing body know the school extremely well. Together with your leadership team, they are highly ambitious for the school. Governors visit the school often and receive information from a range of sources. They provide you with a good level of challenge and are very focused on school improvement and achieving the best possible outcomes for all pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are in place and are fit for purpose. Pupils' safety is of paramount importance to all. Pupils report they feel safe at school and parents agree that they are safe. Pupils demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of issues such as road safety, the firework code, stranger danger and e-safety. Pupils understand what to do if they or their friends are bullied. They said that, although there are very few incidents of bullying in school, they feel confident that they could report it and the adults around them would deal with it effectively.

The school works effectively with external agencies to help safeguard pupils. Leaders have ensured that records are detailed and of high quality. Swift action is taken where there are concerns relating to pupils' safety and well-being and the school is relentless and demanding of other agencies to help ensure that pupils are kept safe. Leaders ensure that staff are regularly trained and kept up to date with the latest safeguarding guidance. As a result, staff clearly understand their responsibility and know what to do if they have any safeguarding concerns.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on key lines of enquiry which we agreed at the start of the inspection. The first was to consider how effective leaders' actions have been to ensure that the early years curriculum meets the needs of children and prepares them for the next stage in their education. This was because, since the previous inspection, children have not met national standards by the end of their time in Reception. Additionally, outcomes for boys have been significantly below those of boys nationally.
- Leadership of the early years has been significantly strengthened and improvements have been rapid. Leaders have been active in visiting other early years provision to help inform their own thinking. As a result they have developed bright, attractive and inviting learning environments. Assessment systems are being refined so that adults working with children now have a better awareness of what to do next to ensure that they make good progress. The teaching of phonics is very effective, with close involvement of parents.
- Children in Nursery and Reception have opportunities to work and play together. This not only develops the language of older children as they explain things to younger ones, it also provides younger children with good role models and opportunities to extend their thoughts and play. For example, Reception pupils displayed excellent social skills by adapting a game they had created so Nursery children could join in.
- The early years curriculum has been reviewed to ensure that it is interesting and engaging to both boys and girls. Boys in the Reception class talked enthusiastically about their activities. Those working in the outside classroom demonstrated high levels of

concentration and were able to play cooperatively, taking turns and sharing. However, it was notable that there were few opportunities for boys or girls to engage in reading, writing and number activities outdoors, despite the fact they spent the majority of their time in this area.

- I then considered how effective leaders' actions have been in ensuring that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, particularly the most able. This was because the information available on the school website did not reflect a broad and balanced curriculum, nor did it provide adequate information for parents to know what their child was learning at school. Despite improvements in recent years a lower proportion of pupils than found nationally were typically working at greater depth at the end of key stages 1 and 2. However, your provisional data suggests an improved picture in 2017 for pupils at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils study a broad and balanced curriculum in both key stages, enriched by specialist teaching in French, music and physical education as well as a range of educational visits and visitors. Displays around the school show pupils produce art of a good quality and study a range of subjects including science, history and geography through engaging topics.
- The mathematics curriculum has improved because leaders have ensured that pupils develop fast recall of key facts such as multiplication tables, number bonds and place value. Additionally, emphasis has been given to the application of mathematical knowledge to problem-solving activities. As a result, pupils are developing a range of methods to show and check their understanding, including mental and written calculation methods. Overall, their progress is accelerating.
- Leaders have ensured that phonics teaching provides strong foundations for reading and writing; and skills-based literacy sessions help pupils learn key aspects of composition, punctuation and grammar. Pupils' writing in literacy books is generally neat and of a good standard and teachers build time into lessons for pupils to edit their writing. However, pupils' writing in other subjects is not of the same quality as that produced in their English books and outcomes are sometimes limited by the spaces allocated for writing on printed worksheets.
- Such limitations particularly hold back the most able pupils. So too does the lack of opportunity in a range of subjects to make decisions about their learning, for example how they might present their knowledge to others. In mathematics, the most able pupils spend too long doing things that they can already do.
- Finally I considered how effective leaders' actions have been to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence. I found that that attendance for all groups of pupils is improving and persistent absence has been reduced considerably. Governors do not authorise term time holidays and the school works closely with the education welfare department to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly. All absence is quickly followed up. Families are supported to help ensure good attendance by the provision of a free breakfast club, which is popular with both parents and pupils. The school's actions have been very effective in this area and, as a result, current figures are broadly in line with attendance nationally.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- children in the early years have more opportunities to read, write, count and problem-solve, particularly in the outdoor learning environment
- all pupils, particularly the most able in mathematics, are moved on to more challenging work quickly, so they reach their full potential
- pupils' writing in all subjects is as good as it is in English, applying the skills they have learned across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Lou Anderson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held meetings with you, senior and middle leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority. I listened to pupils' reading both in lessons across the school and as a specific activity in key stage 1. I visited lessons in the early years and key stages 1 and 2 to observe learning. I scrutinised pupils' work in English, mathematics and topic books. I talked to pupils about their learning, both at formal and informal times throughout the day. I met with parents at the start of the school day and I analysed 21 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I scrutinised documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, information on pupils' attendance and documentation related to safeguarding, as well as the school's assessment and behaviour information.