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15 December 2017

Catriona Goldsmith
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Dear Mrs Goldsmith

Short inspection of Palatine Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 December 2017 with Jo McSherrie, 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 January 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have led the school with determination and commitment over the past four years, making the necessary changes to ensure that pupils are at the heart of all that the school does. Staff and governors share your high aspirations for pupils and, under you and your capable leadership team, the school is moving forward at a rapid pace.

Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the school. Over the last four years there has been a large turnover in teaching staff. There are new senior and middle leaders. The organisation of middle leadership has also changed recently. You and the governing body have managed these changes well, although you acknowledge that the impact of some of these changes is in its infancy.

Staff who completed the online questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about your leadership. Several teachers praised senior leaders for the ongoing support that they receive and the commitment that leaders show to improving teachers' work-life balance.

You have worked hard to address the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. Inspectors required leaders to ensure that the most able pupils received work that was challenging and that teachers planned activities that supported pupils' next steps in their learning. Expectations for pupils are high, and

learning is at the right level for pupils of all abilities. Questioning from teachers is a particular strength and builds on pupils' prior learning. As a result, pupils make strong progress across all aspects of their development.

Since the formation of the new senior leadership team, you and your team have continued to reflect on the impact that your actions are having on pupils' outcomes. Consequently, you have an accurate view of the strengths and weakness of the school. You have also identified some key areas for improvement. These include building on the work that has already taken place to develop the effectiveness of teaching assistants and reducing teacher workload. We agreed that your systems to track pupils' academic progress would benefit from fine-tuning so that it becomes even more useful to leaders and staff.

All parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and those who spoke to inspectors were complimentary about the school. One parent wrote: 'Now our son has moved to Palatine, he is fully included, supported and nurtured every day. The progress he has made is unbelievable. He thinks he is playing and having fun but so much learning is taking place. We are absolutely delighted with the school and its wonderful staff.'

Governors make a strong contribution to the school, despite some members being relatively new to their posts. Governors are an effective team. They possess the necessary expertise to both challenge and support leaders, particularly when it comes to ensuring the health and safety of pupils at the school. You have correctly identified that some further training for governors is required in order for them to understand the new assessment systems that are in place and to continue to hold leaders to account for pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding is effective.

Arrangements to safeguard pupils are effective. The well-being and safety of pupils at the school is underpinned by the in-depth knowledge that staff have about pupils' individual needs. Staff take their responsibilities to keep children safe seriously and safeguarding is at the forefront of their thinking.

Systems to support pupils' medical needs are highly effective. Staff are suitably trained to support pupils with medical conditions and individual risk assessments are regularly reviewed and monitored by leaders. As a result, pupils' health and safety is maintained.

Governors make a strong contribution to the safeguarding culture seen across the school. They hold leaders to account for the effectiveness of policies and procedures and ensure that they are up to date with any changes in safeguarding legislation and guidance.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look at the effectiveness of safeguarding: how leaders are supporting parents, how leaders are ensuring that teachers have high enough expectations for pupils and how successfully the school achieves its aim of making sure that no child is disadvantaged.
- Parents are pleased with the communication that they receive from the school. Helpfully, the school provides parents with numerous opportunities to come into school and hear from guest speakers on a range of topics, for example through monthly coffee mornings. Regular parents' evenings with multi-disciplinary teams enable parents to understand all aspects of their child's progress.
- As a result of teachers' high expectations, most pupils are making good or better progress in all aspects of their learning. School leaders track the progress of pupils at an individual level well, and this enables them to identify when pupils are at risk of falling behind. New systems of assessing and monitoring pupils' progress are thorough. However, these need to take further account of pupils' starting points so that progress measures are more reliable. This will allow leaders to evaluate more precisely the impact that the school is having on pupils' outcomes.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work and observations in classrooms demonstrate that there are no differences in the achievement of particular groups of pupils. Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to ensure that pupils quickly catch up and to improve poor attendance. As a result, progress for all groups of pupils is good and no particular groups of pupils are disadvantaged by poor attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- systems to monitor pupils' progress are informed by pupils' starting points so that leaders' evaluation of pupils' outcomes is more reliable
- middle leaders' contribution to the evaluation of their areas of responsibility is embedded, so that their impact can influence wider school improvement
- governors continue to build on their knowledge and expertise in order to hold leaders fully to account.

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

Yours sincerely

Emma Sanderson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and your senior leadership team at the start of the day. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and agreed the key areas we would focus on during the inspection. During the day, I held further discussions with you. I met with the chair and two other members of the governing body. Inspectors observed teaching in nine lessons, most jointly with senior leaders. We also scrutinised pupils' work with middle leaders. We took account of 19 staff survey responses and 13 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 11 free-text responses. Inspectors spoke with parents, staff and pupils during the day. Inspectors analysed a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' checks on pupils' progress, information on the quality of teaching and learning, performance management information, and safeguarding policies and procedures. A meeting was held with the local authority school improvement consultant linked to the school.