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Mrs Kate Carter
Canford Heath Junior School
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Dear Mrs Carter

Short inspection of Canford Heath Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 7 December 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Canford Heath Junior School is pivotal to the success of the trust. You are the operational lead for this school and the three others in the trust. This is a testament to your strength in leadership. The chief executive officer and the head of school support you well. They provide valuable capacity, enabling you to carry out your demanding role. You have made sure that the school is at the heart of the local community. The night before the inspection, a carol service was held outside in torchlight. This type of activity reaches out successfully to parents and carers. Equally, you have concentrated on the learning needs of pupils and have made sure that they do well in their end of key stage tests. As one parent commented, 'I would certainly recommend this school to others as I feel the teachers work really hard to provide the best for our children.' This comment was indicative of most of the feedback received by Ofsted.

You run an inclusive school. Pupils feel valued and safe. Regardless of ability, pupils enjoy the challenge that you encourage all teachers to offer them. Your ability to train teachers as leaders has meant that several have moved on to positions of responsibility in the trust's other schools. Good-quality teaching and learning are at the heart of what you do. You have updated the marking and feedback policy to make sure that pupils are provided with 'next steps' in their learning. The methodology for teachers is simple and effective. You undertake regular monitoring

activities with the head of school to ensure that teachers' practice is strong. You are providing training for the middle leaders. In this way, teachers are held to account and pupils continue to make effective progress. With the newness of so many staff, you know that there is further work to do in this area to maintain your high standards.

Since the last inspection, you have reduced absenteeism. Attendance is higher than the national average and persistent absence is lower. You have employed a new attendance officer for the trust, and she is working well with families that have struggled with attendance issues in the past. Her work has reduced the problems to a manageable case load.

Safeguarding is effective.

Trustees and the leadership team have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records of recruitment, training and issues of child protection are detailed and of a high quality. Staff receive training on how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation and the influences of radicalisation and extremism. Your designated safeguarding leads work closely together. This is important, given the increasing numbers of pupils with complex problems in the school. Collectively, you make sure that pupils are safe and secure. You and the safeguarding leads work determinedly, yet sensitively, with pupils, parents and external agencies to monitor and support the most vulnerable pupils. Safeguarding arrangements are part of the school's culture.

Inspection findings

- We discussed the progress you had made in improving the outcomes for mathematics and reading. Although pupils had done well previously in reading tests, you recognised that their skills for drawing out inferences were less secure. You have trained teachers to probe more deeply when questioning pupils. Another aspect for action was pupils' limited stamina, shown, for example, when they were required to interrogate a whole page, rather than just a paragraph. Pupils are given a variety of exercises to help prepare them for the end of key stage tests. They are becoming more adept at deducing information from texts and using quotations as evidence. For the low-ability pupils, you have trained experienced teaching assistants to work specifically on improving these pupils' reading skills. It is too early to check the impact of this work.
- With mathematics, you have analysed the test papers taken by last year's cohort. This has shown that it is the more complex problems that challenged pupils. Currently, year groups are working on their arithmetic skills so that pupils are fluent in their calculations. In addition, teachers are introducing more questions where pupils have to use reasoning skills. This is now a regular feature of pupils' work, especially for the middle- and high-ability pupils. You know that teachers must continue to consolidate pupils' learning in mathematics, as well as extend pupils' grasp of more sophisticated aspects. This is an area that needs further development.

- Next, we looked at the teaching of disadvantaged pupils and what you are doing to diminish the difference between their achievement and that of other pupils in the school and nationally. In 2016 and 2017, you evaluated very carefully the successes of pupil premium funding. You have been honest about plans that have not worked well and have tried new things. You have a clear understanding of the barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils face and are determined to eradicate them. Pupils' work shows that there is little to no difference between what is done by disadvantaged and other pupils. You know that the confidence of disadvantaged pupils when taking the end of key stage tests is the next action on which to work.
- In September 2017, you appointed a deputy headteacher in charge of inclusion. She has looked at the issues facing pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities in the school. She has identified a group of pupils who have very complex needs. She has arranged for highly skilled teaching assistants to work with them in a more nurturing environment. This refinement in understanding the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is helping them to achieve more. Teachers recognise that they are still responsible for the successful progress of these pupils, so teach alongside the teaching assistants whenever possible. These pupils reintegrate into mainstream school once their learning and social skills develop. The deputy headteacher in charge of inclusion has adapted the progress measures of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. When progress for these pupils is less than for some of their contemporaries, it can still be measured accurately. For other pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, but whose ability levels are on a par with those of their peers, this refinement of measurement is not necessary.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- through ongoing training for middle leaders, the work of teachers will be monitored better so that pupils' progress is more rapid and teaching is consistent
- pupils are able to develop their mathematical skills in reasoning and problem solving.

I am copying this letter to the executive board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Poole. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the head of school, two deputy headteachers, middle leaders and pastoral leaders. I met with a group of trustees and the chief executive officer. I spoke informally with pupils on the site and had a formal conversation with a group of Year 6 pupils. I visited lessons for classes in Years 4, 5 and 6 and saw the rehearsal of the Year 3 nativity play. I looked at the quality of work in pupils' exercise books and considered documentary evidence relating to the impact of the school's work, including safeguarding. I took into account 56 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and 28 comments written by parents, plus the 56 responses from staff to the Ofsted online survey.