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Miss Gail Ray
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Ray

Short inspection of Caversham Park 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 April 2013.

This school continues to be good.

You and your staff know pupils and their families well. I met several parents during my visit and they all expressed great pleasure in the way the school is led and managed. They were particularly pleased with the school's welcoming atmosphere and the support their children received that enabled them to settle in quickly and learn well.

You and your senior leaders show a relentless drive to keep the school moving forward. Staff morale is high and you have created a strong team spirit among them. All staff are keen and determined to do well by pupils. Governors are passionate about the school. They are committed to ensuring it continues to perform well. They have evaluated their own effectiveness and made changes to the way the governing body operates, making it more efficient and effective. They have an accurate knowledge of the school and clearly understand their roles. Governors often visit the school to understand how it works and to provide strong support, while acting as a critical friend to you.

You are maintaining a good quality of education in the school. Senior leaders' focus on continually improving teaching has been successful. Your leadership team collects a wide range of evidence to check on how well teachers and classroom support staff are performing. This evidence allows you to identify the areas that need to be strengthened and you provide effective support for staff to do so. Your subject leaders coach their colleagues well in the expected teaching methods to

promote pupils' good learning, especially in English and mathematics. Consequently, teaching across the school is consistently effective and pupils make strong progress.

Teachers have developed good conditions for learning in their classrooms. They provide effective feedback to pupils about their work, which helps them to make strong progress. Classroom support staff are a valuable asset in helping pupils to learn. They are well trained and liaise closely with teachers to understand their role. Several classroom support staff are skilled in providing emotional and social support to vulnerable pupils and their families.

I was delighted to meet and talk to your pupils. They like coming to school and respect their teachers. They talked confidently about their work and the enjoyment they get at school. I saw that pupils behaved well and showed a love of learning. They settled to work quickly and listened well to their teachers. Particularly noticeable was how well they collaborated with each other when discussing ideas.

After the previous inspection, you immediately set about tackling the areas for improvement identified in the report. It was recommended that school leaders helped key stage 1 pupils to improve their basic number skills in mathematics and ensured that teachers provided them with appropriately challenging work. You have achieved this through well-focused training and coaching for teachers and a successful strategy to improve pupils' skills in mental mathematics. In 2017, pupils reaching the end of key stage 1 performed better than others nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.

You are quite rightly proud of the impact of phonics teaching on developing pupils' reading skills. Year 1 pupils have performed above the expected standard in the phonics screening check for the last few years. You are sharing your expertise with other local schools.

You recognise that the rate of progress made by key stage 2 pupils in writing is slower than in reading and mathematics. In addition, you have identified that the most able pupils are not stretched sufficiently, as the proportion of pupils attaining greater depth in writing and mathematics in 2016 was not good enough. You and other senior leaders have taken effective steps to ensure that key stage 2 pupils' progress in writing improves. By working with the local authority and other local schools, you have helped teachers to understand the standards pupils have to reach, including those that demonstrate learning at greater depth. As a result, by the end of key stage 2 in 2017, pupils' attainment in writing improved and was above the national average. More of the most able pupils in Year 2 than nationally attained greater depth in writing and mathematics. However, you are not complacent. You have identified that teachers should continue to provide a greater level of challenge. You also recognise that pupils should be required to explain their ideas more often in mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff are very clear about your responsibility to safeguard children in your care effectively. Pupils' safety and their well-being are given the highest priority. You have made sure that all the necessary safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Governors make monthly visits to assure themselves that safeguarding arrangements are effective.

Staff are concerned for pupils' welfare. They know each pupil well and report any safeguarding issues quickly. Pupils spoke warmly about how well they were looked after. They feel safe and valued. They reported that bullying or misbehaviour was rare and that they had great confidence in their teachers sorting out any problems quickly and fairly. Pupils said that they had learned how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy.

Your records show that all staff have received appropriate safeguarding training. Adults know the expected procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns. Records relating to safeguarding are detailed and stored securely. You are well aware of the social services provided by the local authority and how to access them or to seek advice.

Inspection findings

- At our first meeting, which also involved the deputy headteacher, we agreed areas to explore so that I could be satisfied that your school remains good. We decided to focus on:
 - how effective school leaders have been in ensuring that pupils' progress in key stage 2 writing improves
 - how well the most able pupils are being challenged
 - the impact of school leaders' strategies to improve the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities
 - the success of the school's phonics teaching strategy.
- We visited all year groups and saw pupils working conscientiously in mathematics and writing. We saw a consistent approach to teaching and effective deployment of classroom support staff.
- When subject leaders and I scrutinised a sample of pupils' exercise books, we agreed that pupils took pride in their work and responded well to guidance from teachers. Also, we noted that although the most able pupils were often set challenging tasks, these were not of consistently high quality in all classes
- Pupils' writing in key stage 2 showed strong improvement over the term. For example, we saw more complex sentences developing, better organisation of text on the page and a more consistently correct use of punctuation. Books also showed that pupils from different starting points, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged, made strong progress. This confirmed the school's recorded information showing good progress in writing for all groups of pupils.

- Pupils' books demonstrated that they developed strong fluency in mathematics and have some opportunities for explaining their work. We agreed that it would be useful to extend these opportunities for reasoning, to deepen pupils' understanding. We noted that teachers planned appropriate tasks for pupils from different starting points and this was helping them to improve. We could see that the most able pupils were making good progress.
- We looked at attendance figures for the last few years. Overall, attendance has been maintained above average, but, in 2016, the attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities was below average. You have improved the strategies used to raise attendance figures, such as, when appropriate, involving the educational welfare officer in meetings with parents. There has been a positive impact on the attendance rate of this group of pupils, which rose to be in line with the national average in 2017 and is even higher this term.
- We visited three phonics groups in Reception and Years 1 and 2. We saw well-executed activities matched to pupils' needs, and engaged and well-behaved pupils. Teachers and classroom support staff modelled pronunciation, segmenting and blending accurately. School information about pupils' acquisition of phonics skills confirms that they pick up the necessary skills quickly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils are consistently set work that challenges them
- pupils have more opportunities to explain their reasoning in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

James McVeigh
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher (who is also the English leader), the inclusion manager and the subject leader for mathematics. I spoke to the business manager, the chair of the governing body and two other governors. I talked by phone to a representative of the local authority.

With the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, I visited each classroom and saw pupils engaged in learning activities. I talked to pupils in class, and more formally with Year 5 and 6 pupils, about their work and how they felt about school.

I saw pupils at play and talked to supervising staff about their understanding of safeguarding.

I looked at pupils' written work in different subjects, but mainly in mathematics and English. I spoke to parents about the school and its performance. I considered 84 responses, including 45 written ones, to the online questionnaire, Parent View, 13 responses to the staff survey and 61 pupil responses. I examined a range of school documents, including records about behaviour and safeguarding, self-evaluation, attendance figures and governors' meetings.