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Mr Neil Hardy
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hardy

Short inspection of North Baddesley Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 17 January 2018, 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. In the three years since you joined the school, the effective work of both you and your assistant headteachers has led the school securely through a journey of ongoing improvement. This is despite the challenges of managing major building projects, which have improved the quality and safety of the physical school environment and prepared it for planned future expansion. You identify the school's strengths accurately, and demonstrate a helpfully pragmatic approach to tackling areas which need to improve. Governors, while currently depleted in numbers, know the school well, and reassure themselves about standards in the school by providing useful support and challenge to leaders about their work.

Pupils and staff jointly describe the school as a happy place that they are proud to be a part of. Staff value greatly the open culture that supports their professional development. They work well together to share skills and expertise, and welcome opportunities to learn from training and through visiting colleagues in other schools. Staff understand the school's priorities clearly, and are held closely to account for the difference their work is expected to make to pupils' outcomes and their preparation for secondary school.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe and well looked after, and say that their work challenges them appropriately. They interact confidently with each other and with adults in the school. Pupils appreciate how the school council provides

opportunities for their voices to be heard, and are pleased when leaders act on their suggestions, such as by recently introducing 'playground buddies'. These provide visible reassurance for pupils who go and sit on the new 'friendship bench', or who may seem sad or lonely. Pupils are rightly proud to be selected as a playground buddy, as a result of a carefully thought-out application process that develops their understanding of democracy.

Parents and carers value the care and support that their children receive. Those who spoke to me or expressed their views through Parent View describe how positively the school's ethos helps their children to feel safe and well cared for. The vast majority of parents felt that their children make good progress as a result of the quality of teaching they experience. A small number of parents said that they would value a more visible staff presence on the playground at the end of the day. They felt this would be reassuring for younger pupils and their parents, as well as supporting effective communication between home and school.

Since the last inspection, you and your team have made successful improvements to the school. Staff describe the focused work your assistant headteachers have led on ensuring that teaching meets pupils' different needs, so that they are challenged sufficiently. This was evident during the learning walks I carried out with your assistant headteachers, and in the quality of work seen in pupils' books. As part of this drive, some thoughtful work by staff is improving how effectively pupils receive feedback about how to improve their work. Your leadership team recognises, however, that there is further work to do to ensure that more recent developments to the quality of teaching become embedded and sustained. This will enable the progress that pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics across key stage 2 to become consistently strong over time.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors understand their safeguarding responsibilities clearly. They ensure that all adults coming into school are vetted appropriately. Leaders provide effective support to adults in fulfilling their safeguarding duties, by making sure that policies and processes are fit for purpose and that adults are appropriately and regularly trained. This contributes to the culture of nurture and care that is evident across the school, and which parents recognise and appreciate.

Staff feel confident to report any concerns they may have about a pupil. Leaders use effective systems to review this information efficiently, and take prompt action when necessary. The recently introduced behaviour support (pastoral) role provides families with a key point of contact, which helps them to access a useful layer of additional support. Leaders work with experts and services beyond the school, as well as with colleagues from the linked infant and secondary schools, and keep careful records of their work. This reduces the risk of vulnerable pupils and families 'slipping through the net'.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we agreed to focus on: how effectively leaders have maintained standards and improved the school since the last inspection; the extent to which pupils are challenged sufficiently, especially in reading and mathematics; how leaders ensure that potentially vulnerable pupils attend school regularly; and whether current pupils are making consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout their time at the school.
- Leaders recognise that some pupils need to make rapid progress in order to reach the standard expected for their age. In contrast, others are already working at this level but need to be challenged suitably to deepen their thinking, so that they achieve the higher standard they are capable of. Recent changes to the way adults are deployed to work flexibly with pupils during lessons, particularly in Year 6, is enabling staff to meet pupils' different learning needs effectively. Pupils reflect positively on how this approach helps them to make good progress.
- Staff make effective use of relevant training to support their planning of learning activities in reading, writing and mathematics. A newly introduced approach to teaching reading focuses on developing skills such as using inference, and is also helping pupils to improve the quality of their writing. During mathematics lessons, an evolving focus on reasoning, application of knowledge and problem-solving is challenging pupils to think more deeply. Pupils welcome this consistent approach to learning, which is supported well by resources in their stimulating learning environment.
- Leaders know that, in the past, pupils, particularly the most able, have not consistently made strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics during key stage 2. In 2017, although pupils reached standards that were at least in line with national figures, their progress in reading and mathematics across key stage 2 was slightly below average. The reverse pattern was true in 2016, with pupils making above-average progress from their typically lower starting points, but achieving below expected standards. Leaders recognise the importance of ensuring that pupils make consistently good progress across their subjects, so that they can attain the highest possible outcomes by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' current work shows them to be typically making secure progress with their learning over time. In some instances, pupils can be seen to be making very rapid gains in their writing and mathematics as a result of the high-quality support they receive. The quality of work seen during the inspection validates leaders' detailed information about how well pupils are achieving. There is further work to do to ensure that disadvantaged pupils catch up with their peers, and to accelerate progress for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. However, there is evidence that suggests in-school variation is reducing, as a result of leaders' targeted support for underachieving pupils.
- Most pupils attend school very regularly. Attendance figures for the whole school are above the national average, and increasing over time, because staff promote the importance of coming to school. Where necessary, leaders work closely with pupils and families to improve punctuality and attendance, through an

appropriate combination of support and challenge. Attendance figures for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are below national levels, but improving steadily over time.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- increased challenge in lessons leads to pupils making stronger progress by the end of Year 6 than was the case for reading and mathematics in 2017
- recently raised levels of attainment in reading are sustained while outcomes in mathematics are improved, so that attainment and progress are consistently strong across the school over time.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Moles
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and your two assistant headteachers to discuss the school's self-evaluation and the actions you have taken to address their areas for improvement from the previous inspection. Together with your assistant headteachers, I visited lessons in all year groups to observe learning and talk to pupils, and also looked at a sample of pupils' work. I met formally with groups of pupils and staff, and with two governors. I also spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority, and informally with parents and pupils at the start of the day and at playtime. I reviewed a wide range of relevant information provided by the school or publicly available, including safeguarding documents and information about pupils' performance and attendance. I took into account 35 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire, including 33 written 'free-text' comments, and survey responses from 41 pupils and 28 members of staff.