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Mrs Kathryn Swales
Headteacher
Girlington Primary School
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Dear Mrs Swales

Short inspection of Girlington Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 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 January 2013.

The school continues to be good.

You have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have made sure that the school's strong inclusive values are at the heart of everything you do at Girlington Primary School. Your deep commitment to every child and family is shared by the whole school community. You and your colleagues work tirelessly to understand and meet the needs of all your pupils, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. This is because you are resolute in your ambition for them all to be successful learners who achieve the best possible outcomes. Importantly, you and your senior leaders have a thoughtful, reflective and systematic approach to identifying and tackling the things that you know need further work. As a result, there has been a strong and sustained improvement in the progress pupils make from their different starting points. Although the progress disadvantaged pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics is improving, you know that more work is needed to secure the best possible outcomes for this group of pupils by the end of key stage 2.

Inspectors identified one area for improvement at the school's last inspection: to raise standards by further improving the quality of teaching. In particular, inspectors recommended that the most able pupils should be set work that is more challenging, to develop and deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding. You have tackled this area for improvement well. You have re-designed the curriculum and developed a range of new approaches, which focus on equipping the most able pupils with the skills they need to be successful and resilient learners. The most able pupils were unequivocally positive about the difference this has made to their learning and progress. One Year 6 pupil spoke to me about how his mathematics work is pitched just at the right level. He

described confidently and in detail how his work is challenging him to use his mathematics knowledge to reason and solve complex problems and, indeed, how he is learning to be a resilient and resourceful learner. Importantly, you and your senior leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. You have pinpointed the aspects of the curriculum and teachers' practice which need further work, and your school development plan provides a strong starting point for securing further improvement and accelerating the progress pupils make.

The governing body makes a strong and effective contribution to the school's leadership and management. Governors bring a wide range of knowledge and skills, which they use to good effect to support and challenge you and your senior leaders. Crucially, governors are powerful advocates for the children and families you serve. This is especially the case for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, including pupils who are deaf or have hearing loss. Governors are also proactive in supporting you and challenging families, for example, when you have concerns about pupils' attendance. Notably, governors have worked closely and effectively with you to sustain the school's passionately inclusive approach and your strong focus on giving pupils the best possible start.

You have rightly identified the wider development of the school's leadership and management as an area needing further work. The actions you are taking are already having a positive effect on the knowledge, skills and confidence of middle leaders who are benefiting from the well-thought-out leadership development programme you are providing.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. There is a deeply embedded culture of identifying and helping pupils who are vulnerable. Staff understand their safeguarding duties and responsibilities and are alert to the signs that a pupil may be at risk. Records show that you and your colleagues take timely and effective action when concerns are identified. Importantly, you work proactively with other services and professionals to provide the help and protection children and their families need.

You and your colleagues know pupils and their families extremely well. You work hard to build strong and trusting relationships with parents and carers and you have developed a range of innovative ways of involving them in their children's learning and development, especially in the early years. Importantly, however, you are unafraid of having difficult conversations with families when this is needed and, equally, parents told me that you listen to them and take action when they have a concern about their child's learning, development, safety or welfare.

Pupils told me that they feel safe and well supported at Girlington Primary School. They said that the school site is managed safely and activities are supervised well. The school's distinctive focus on valuing other people is fully embraced by pupils who understand the importance of being tolerant and respectful towards people who are

different. Pupils' conduct and behaviour are exemplary.

Inspection findings

- First, I wanted to find out whether pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, are learning well and making fast progress in mathematics. I was also keen to know whether the most able pupils are being set challenging work in mathematics. Pupils are making faster progress as a result of improvements in the mathematics curriculum and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers explain ideas and concepts well, model methods clearly and pick up pupils' misconceptions quickly. Importantly, pupils are challenged to use and apply their mathematics knowledge and skills to reason and solve real-life problems. You and your senior leaders are carefully monitoring the impact of the changes you have made on the progress pupils' make. As a result, you have a clear view of how well pupils, including the most able pupils and those who are disadvantaged, are doing in mathematics. Critically, you understand that more work is needed to fully embed these improvements in mathematics so that pupils make accelerated progress and achieve excellent outcomes. Equally, you know that there is more work to do to further improve the curriculum, teaching and learning in a wider range of subjects. You also recognise that, at this stage, middle leaders do not have a strong enough influence on these important areas of the school's work.
- Next, I was interested in the school's provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including those who are deaf or have hearing loss. I wanted to know whether pupils' needs are identified and assessed accurately and whether the support pupils receive is helping them to learn well and make strong progress. The provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is effectively led by the school's special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). Pupils' widely diverse needs are identified and assessed well, and specialist provision is personalised and effective. Pupils who are deaf or have hearing loss are skilfully and sensitively supported and, as a result, are fully included in all aspects of school life. From their sometimes low starting points, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make strong progress in their learning and development.
- I was also keen to know whether additional funding is being used effectively to improve the outcomes of early years children who are disadvantaged. There has been a strong focus on giving children the best start in the early years since the school's last inspection. The provision for two-year-old children is helping them to develop the skills they need to learn well and make strong progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. The indoor and outdoor areas provide the rich range of experiences and opportunities children need to develop and grow. Children's learning is assessed and tracked systematically and well. Information about how well children are doing is used to identify their next steps. These are, in turn, used to modify and develop the learning activities which children choose for themselves and those which are led by adults. This includes teaching which is sharply focused on the development of children's reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Additional funding is used in a well-planned way to provide the extra help and support children who experience difficulties need. A notable example is the school's effective work with speech and language therapists to identify and better meet children's increasingly complex

speech, language and communication needs.

- Lastly, I wanted to check whether the strengths in pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, identified at the school's last inspection, have been sustained. There has been a trend of improvement in pupils' attendance and in 2016/17 the attendance of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, was above the national average for primary schools. Pupils conduct themselves exceptionally well. They are polite and respectful towards each other and, crucially, are knowledgeable about people who are different and understand the importance of behaving in a tolerant and supportive way. Pupils work and apply themselves well. They have an increasingly sophisticated understanding of how to be confident, successful and resilient learners as a result of the school's effective work. These skills and qualities are helping pupils, including the most able pupils and those who are disadvantaged, to make stronger progress and achieve better outcomes.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they continue to:

- improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that disadvantaged pupils, in particular, make the accelerated progress needed to achieve excellent outcomes by the end of Year 6
- support and develop middle leaders, especially those who are less experienced, so that they make a strong and influential contribution to the school's leadership and management.

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

Yours sincerely

Nick Whittaker
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, senior and middle leaders, six representatives from the governing body, a representative from the local authority and a group of Year 6 pupils. I visited lessons in all key stages with you, looked at the work in pupils' books and talked to them about their learning. I considered the results from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including six written responses from parents. I also considered 44 responses to the online staff survey and 194 responses to the online pupil survey. I examined a range of documents including information about safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan and information about pupils' learning and progress.