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Dear Mrs Allsopp

Short inspection of Radcliffe-on-Trent Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 14 February 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 October 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Teaching continues to motivate and inspire the pupils to try their hardest. Learning takes place in atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.

Since becoming headteacher in January 2015, you have maintained the good work of your predecessor and strengthened the quality of teaching further. The impact of this is seen most clearly in reading, where pupils are making markedly faster progress. As a result, pupils' attainment in reading has risen considerably compared with that of previous years. The proportion of pupils meeting or exceeding age-related expectations by the end of Year 6 in 2017 was much higher than that seen nationally. Pupils who previously had found reading difficult made exceptional progress. You and other staff are achieving your pledge that, 'every child will leave the school a reader'.

At the last inspection, the school was asked to improve teachers' skills in using assessment. Lessons are now linked more closely to pupils' previous learning and this aspect of teaching has improved strongly. Teachers have become skilled at identifying quickly which pupils are falling behind. They ensure that the extra support the pupils need is provided quickly and effectively. This explains why the pupils who enter the school with lower standards than expected for their age make such rapid progress. Your review of the way teachers assess and mark pupils' work has strengthened this practice further. With good support from teaching assistants, teachers quickly and routinely assess pupils' work during lessons. They use this information to move pupils quickly on to harder work or to give them extra help if it is needed. This 'live' use of assessment to

guide teaching ensures that pupils quickly receive the support and challenge they need. It also helps teachers to plan future teaching without overburdening them with marking. The last inspection report also asked the school to make sure resources were quickly available to support pupils' achievement. The introduction of the 'enable table' in lessons has proved a simple but effective way of providing pupils with additional resources, such as dictionaries and thesauruses.

Very effective provision for pupils' personal development ensures that pupils behave very well. They are confident and are keen to talk to visitors about their school. I was almost overwhelmed at breaktime by the number of pupils who wanted to tell me all the good things about their school. Many pupils take up the wide-ranging and high-quality opportunities for sport provided for them. The leaders responsible provide a good balance between competitive sports for the most talented pupils and opportunities for all pupils to participate, irrespective of their skills. Leaders have maintained the strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are courteous, curious about the world and respectful of differences. When the school community devised the 'be rules' which set out expectations of how pupils should learn and behave, it was the pupils that insisted that one of the rules should be 'be unique'.

Very effective governance arrangements mean that the school is well placed to build on its many strengths. You know that the strong gains made in reading are not yet fully in place in writing and in mathematics, particularly for the most able pupils. You also know that assessment in science and the foundation subjects is not as rigorous as you would like.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the other staff ensure that pupils know it is important to be kind to each other. The pupils know that bullying is a horrible thing to do. Almost all always stick to the relevant 'be rule': 'be kind and caring'. Occasional incidents of bullying are sorted out quickly. Pupils know that if they post a note in the worry box, you or one of your colleagues will quickly come and talk to them. Staff model the kindness and courtesy they expect from pupils in the way they teach. Pupils therefore feel safe, secure and happy.

You and the other safeguarding leaders are well trained and take every step to ensure that pupils who are at risk of harm are kept safe and protected. The governing body keeps a watchful eye on the school's safeguarding arrangements to ensure that they are robust and effective.

Inspection findings

- The support provided for disadvantaged pupils is a key strength of the school. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching age-related expectations has increased. In 2017, disadvantaged pupils achieved exceptionally well in reading by the end of Year 6. These improvements are a result of strong leadership of this aspect of the school's work.

- The leader responsible for allocating pupil premium funding ensures that all the actions taken to support disadvantaged pupils are rooted firmly in research evidence about what works. Leaders and the governing body check very closely the impact of the money spent to check it has made the difference intended. The school's detailed pupil premium strategy identifies very precisely exactly where the money is being spent and the reasons for its use.
- The pupils whose learning is supported through the pupil premium were very keen to tell me how the extra help is raising their achievement. They showed me how they use personal 'learning walls' to track their progress towards their individual targets. Leaders have worked well with specific groups of disadvantaged pupils to boost their attendance and their achievement, particularly in reading.
- Leaders are also working effectively to boost the achievement of the most able pupils in mathematics. They know that the most able pupils have reached high standards in the past but have made less progress than other pupils from their high starting points.
- The skilled and knowledgeable subject leader has strengthened the mathematics curriculum by ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to apply their reasoning and problem-solving skills. In the lessons I visited, it was clear that pupils have become used to tackling unfamiliar problems independently. They select their own methods and then explain their reasoning. The most able pupils are now routinely given more difficult challenges that really test them and make them think hard. These approaches are beginning to ensure that these pupils tackle mathematical problems in greater depth. Occasionally, teachers do not boost the understanding of the whole class by quickly drawing out the key concepts that explain why a particular approach works.
- In the last two years, boys have achieved slightly less well than girls in writing. Again, strong subject leadership is making a difference. Changes to the curriculum have been accompanied by good-quality training for staff. Teaching now motivates and inspires the boys as well as much it does the girls. Leaders have increased the number of opportunities for boys to write in subjects that interest them most, for example history and science. The increased focus on writing composition across the curriculum has raised pupils' enjoyment of writing and is making a positive difference to their attainment. The staff are providing a wider range of stimulus material to capture pupils' interest and inspire their imaginations than previously. In one lesson I visited, for example, the boys were keen to share their imagined accounts of the D-Day landings. One had written, 'My eyes scanned the heart-shattering scene, in search of a glimmer of hope; in search of steadiness; in search of anything but violence.'
- The quality and effectiveness of leadership in other subjects has increased since the last inspection. Subject leaders are well trained and share their expertise regularly with colleagues. They check pupils' work to ensure that the curriculum is being delivered in their subjects in all classes. Subject leaders also use these audits of pupils' work to provide helpful feedback to staff on what they are doing well and where they might improve their practice. Subject leaders in science and the foundation subjects do not yet have a precise enough understanding of how well pupils are doing in these subjects. This restricts their ability to identify the progress that different groups of pupils are making.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the refinements being made to teaching in mathematics and in writing result in sustained improvements to pupils' attainment and achievement, including for the most able pupils
- teachers and subject leaders strengthen their use of assessment in science and the foundation subjects so that they know precisely how well pupils are achieving in all subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Daniel Burton
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- During the inspection I met with you and other staff to discuss the school's progress since the last inspection. I also met with members of the governing body. I spoke with groups of parents and carers at the end of the school day. I spoke with pupils informally during the day and held a meeting with a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6. I also spoke with subject leaders and those responsible for the school's use of the pupil premium.
- I scrutinised a wide range of information, including policies and records related to safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation, its plans for improvement and its review of the pupil premium spending. I looked at assessment information for previous year groups and those pupils currently in the school. I considered the 54 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 54 comments made by parents through Ofsted's free-text service.
- Together, we observed learning in all year groups in the school, though not in all classes.