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Mrs Susan Chapman
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Chapman

Short inspection of Stanton Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 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 September 2013.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

For some time, governance has been insufficiently effective in holding leaders to account. The school has struggled to recruit sufficient governors. Although the new governing body is enthusiastic, governors are inexperienced and there is little evidence of challenge to school leaders. Initial problems with the new building have provided leaders and governors with important issues to sort out. These have been a distraction, while educational standards in some areas have been too low.

It is clear that you have raised the expectations of what pupils should achieve. Comments from parents and carers suggest that these raised expectations are not fully understood. Parents responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were evenly divided on whether they would recommend the school. Some parents were highly supportive, making comments such as, 'My child is thriving at this school' and, 'Their skills have gone from strength to strength academically and emotionally.' However, even some of the most positive parents expressed reservations about the consistency of behaviour management. Some parents were particularly concerned that the pressure to produce results sometimes leads to inappropriate language by teachers or teachers paying insufficient attention to pupils' individual needs. Whether or not parental views are accurate, there is clearly a perception that communication needs to improve between the school and parents

and, particularly where there are part-time staff, between teachers.

Some parents raised concerns about behaviour. During the inspection, I found the school to be a calm and orderly environment. Information from pupils and staff suggests that this is typical of behaviour over time. You recognise that there are some particular pupils and classes that sometimes present challenging behaviour and have allocated teachers to classes in response.

In recent years, outcomes in some areas have not been good enough. For example, not enough children at key stage 1 achieve the standard expected for their age in reading. In mathematics, at key stage 2, pupils' progress has declined over time so that in the 2016 and 2017 national tests pupils' progress was in the bottom fifth nationally. You and other leaders are able to talk about a range of recently introduced initiatives and approaches, which you are confident are raising standards. There is a history of below-average attainment and progress. Pupils are beginning to catch up, but pupils' current work shows that it is too soon to see enough impact from the improved provision.

Safeguarding is effective.

All statutory requirements are met and systems are secure. Staff in the school have all taken part in necessary training in order to promote safeguarding effectively. The school has a friendly atmosphere. I observed and chatted with pupils, and they were relaxed and happy. I observed very positive interactions between the staff and pupils. Pupils told me that they feel safe because of the care and attention provided by adults in the school. Pupils explained confidently the strategies they would use to stay safe when online.

Parents that responded to Parent View expressed very mixed views of how effectively the school deals with bullying. School documents show that allegations of bullying are recorded and investigated. Governors have recently questioned and challenged leaders about follow-up procedures. Although leaders recognise that incidents sometimes occur, they firmly believe that any issues are predominantly isolated and not part of the wider culture of the school. Pupils told me that they value the work of the staff in explaining what bullying is and, on the rare occasion it does occur, in making sure it is dealt with effectively.

Your systems to raise any concerns about the safety of pupils and to involve external agencies are thorough. Your system for recording such concerns and referrals ensures that all essential information is readily accessible to key personnel, including details of how concerns have been resolved.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to establish the progress that pupils are making in reading in key stage 1. This was because, over the last two years, pupils' attainment in reading has been below the national average. However, attainment at the end of early years and in Year 1 has been above average. Through careful

analysis and reflection, leaders have an accurate understanding of why pupils did not achieve as well in reading as they could at the end of Year 2. As a result, leaders have amended the way reading is taught to ensure that pupils better develop skills of comprehension, inference and explanation.

- Pupils know and understand the reading skills they are developing, and this led to improved pupil outcomes in reading by the end of key stage 2 in 2017. Leaders have provided a range of new resources, including new colour-coded reading books. As a result, children enjoy reading. Leaders have also introduced a new system to track children's progress more carefully. The new approach to reading has recently been introduced throughout the school and is beginning to improve pupils' progress in key stage 1.
- My second line of enquiry was to establish the progress pupils are making in mathematics in key stage 2. This was because, over the last two years, pupils' progress in mathematics was low, for all pupils and especially for the most able pupils. Over the same period, pupils' attainment in mathematics was also lower than the national average. Leaders drew on research to inform their strategy for improving outcomes in mathematics. The subject leader trialled new approaches in her own teaching to make sure that they worked well. A positive effect is clearly evident in key stage 1. Here, the pupils have developed effectively their recall of mathematical knowledge and fluency and accuracy of its application. In turn, this has supported their reasoning about mathematics and problem solving, which they are undertaking with increasing confidence and success.
- This approach has recently been extended to the rest of the school. Staff have received appropriate training and are more confident about mathematics and in their subject knowledge. The mathematics leader is aware that pupils in key stage 2 still have gaps in their understanding. The new tracking grids enable teachers to identify the areas children need to learn and reinforce in order to make progress. In some lessons, teachers consider how to stretch the most able pupils when planning lessons by providing them with a 'Don Nao Jin'. However, the actual challenge in lessons is not consistently set at the right level. Too often, the teaching and activities are not pitched highly enough to enable all pupils to make strong and sustained progress.
- The leader for mathematics knows what is required to improve pupils' outcomes but acknowledges that the approach has only recently been put in place and that it is a priority to ensure that leaders review what is working well and that it continues to be applied consistently and effectively by all teachers. Pupils are positive about the support they receive. One pupil told me, 'Teachers help us learn; they help you no matter what.'
- My third line of enquiry was to establish how leaders ensure that the good progress made by children in the early years is maintained as they begin key stage 1. Leaders have taken the strategic decision this year to move the Reception teacher with the children to Year 1 to ensure a smooth transition and to introduce some of the good practice in the early years into key stage 1. The leader for early years has also recently introduced some effective transition documents to follow the children as they move through the school. These are designed to build a picture of the child and their learning journey as they

progress through the key stages.

- The leader for early years and the leader of key stage 1 have also reviewed the resources used for phonics and have replaced them to improve the teaching and learning in phonics even further. Intervention is now put in place in early key stage 2 to support those children who did not reach the required standard in the phonics screening check in key stage 1, and this is supporting more positive outcomes in reading in key stage 2.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the effectiveness of the governing body strengthens, so that it has the skills and expertise to ensure the long-term improvement of the school
- teachers challenge pupils more effectively so that pupils' progress accelerates in reading in key stage 1 and mathematics in key stage 2
- the partnership with parents strengthens, through purposefully seeking and considering parents' views and explaining carefully any changes.

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

Yours sincerely

Ashley Best-White
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2015–2017.
- During this short inspection, I met with you, senior leaders, a representative from the local authority, and three members of the governing body and I had a telephone conversation with the chair of governors.
- Accompanied by you, I visited lessons in all key stage 1 and 2 classes, looked at pupils' work in books and spoke with pupils throughout the day. I also held a meeting with pupils from keys stage 1 and 2.
- I reviewed school documentation, including the school self-evaluation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website.
- I scrutinised a range of information about the school's safeguarding work, including the single central record and leaders' systems for managing information.
- I took account of 68 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 30 free-text comments, one letter and one email from parents and 16

responses to the online staff questionnaire. I also took account of the 27 responses to the online pupil questionnaire and the views of parents I met during the inspection.