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Miss Melissa Mitchell
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Dear Miss Mitchell

Short inspection of Tunstead Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 March 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 2014.

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.**

On taking up the post of headteacher in September 2017, you immediately set about identifying what was working well and what needed development. You accurately identified improvements that needed to be put in place and your subsequent development plan and the actions identified within it are appropriate.

There is tangible evidence of the impact of some of the new initiatives and actions that you have taken. You acted swiftly to strengthen safeguarding systems and procedures. Changes have been made to the curriculum, including the introduction of theme days, such as the recent 'Harry Potter' day. These are inspiring pupils to produce more high-quality writing. You have reorganised the library into a larger area where pupils can spend time enjoying reading books, and have plans to further improve this. Additionally, you have introduced core values. The influence of these is evident across the school. For example, we saw pupils being encouraged to be resilient when solving challenging mathematical problems. Pupils have lots of opportunities to engage in collaborative learning. New systems for assessing pupils and recording their progress have been implemented as well as for checking on the quality of teaching.

In your first term, you and the governing body had to recruit new teachers to replace two out of your four class teachers who had, between them, held responsibilities for leading English, mathematics and special educational needs. Initially, this slowed the speed of implementation of planned improvements and their effectiveness in improving teaching and learning across the school. With new leadership in English and special educational needs, you are now poised to increase the rate of school improvement.

Parents and carers spoken to at the start of the day and those who responded to Ofsted's online survey Parent View are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They agree that their children are happy at school and staff care for them well. Several also commented on the improvements that they had noticed since you became headteacher. One typically commented:

'I currently have three children at this school and it meets the needs of all of them. I am extremely impressed with the new headteacher and the way the school is moving forward. I would have no hesitation in recommending this school to any parent.'

Pupils are very happy at school and feel safe. Relationships are warm, and older and younger children play together harmoniously and get on well. Although the core values are a relatively new initiative, pupils show a good understanding of these. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils explained to me that being resilient meant that they kept going and did not give up when they found tasks challenging. Pupils' behaviour is consistently good.

You are providing energetic and determined leadership. All staff who responded to Ofsted's survey agree that the school is well managed and say that they are proud to work here. They and governors share your ambition to bring about further improvements. Governors are highly committed. Their termly monitoring days are clearly focused on the school's improvement priorities. Consequently, they are well informed and able to hold leaders to account effectively for pupils' achievement.

Safeguarding is effective.

Since taking up your post as headteacher, you have audited and refined safeguarding systems. Documentation is clear and comprehensive. Staff training for all aspects of safeguarding is up to date. You have also introduced regular weekly updates. Consequently, staff are very aware of the procedures they need to follow if they have any concerns. All members of staff know pupils very well and are quick to recognise when a pupil may be vulnerable or in need of help. There is a culture of high vigilance, and pupils' well-being is given the highest priority.

All necessary checks are made when recruiting new staff to work with pupils and these are diligently recorded on the single central record. Governors make regular checks to ensure that all aspects of safeguarding are compliant.

Inspection findings

- The first line of enquiry that we agreed was to determine how well leaders are acting to raise standards and improve progress across key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. This was because, at the end of key stage 2, in both 2016 and 2017, published performance information shows that the proportion of pupils who reached age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics combined was below average. Pupils' progress in all three subjects from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6 has been average.
- We observed teaching and learning in English and mathematics in key stage 2 classes, including the work in pupils' books. We saw that recent initiatives to provide more inspiration for pupils to write are beginning to show a positive impact. We saw, for example, how Year 6 pupils had developed and refined their writing around the text 'The Lighthouse' to produce some impressive writing. However, we agreed that this process is not typical across the school.
- We saw that pupils across the school are working at the appropriate levels in mathematics. However, opportunities to develop reasoning skills are not being provided consistently across the school.
- We looked at pupils' learning and their writing across the curriculum, for example in science and in their topic work. We saw that in these other subjects some work is sporadic. There is less evidence that teachers are planning sequences of work, as they do for English and mathematics.
- You have identified that work across the curriculum does not yet provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their English skills. Additionally, we agreed that pupils' presentation of their work in their books in the wider curriculum is variable, because teachers do not insist on the same high quality of presentation as they usually do in English and mathematics.
- My next line of enquiry related to how well the school had addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection report. These related to the use of teaching assistants, raising standards in mathematics and improving pupils' knowledge of phonics.
- In all classrooms, we saw that teaching assistants were providing good-quality support to individual pupils and groups. They are suitably skilled and confident and, consequently, they are making a good contribution to the learning of the pupils they work with.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was broadly average in both 2016 and 2017. In 2017, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher standard was above average. You recognise that there is still further work to be done to ensure that progression in mathematics is consistent and that new approaches to developing pupils' reasoning skills are fully embedded.
- Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics test show year-on-year improvement from 2015 to 2017. Evidence shows that this area for improvement has been addressed effectively. Additionally, your improvement plans identify further actions to ensure greater consistency in the teaching of phonics across the school.

- My final line of enquiry was around leadership and management. I wanted to determine whether there was good capacity to bring about sustained improvement. Following new appointments, you have a stable staff and greater leadership capacity. You recognise that the new leadership team is in its infancy and will need appropriate training and development. Nevertheless, there is evidence that this stronger leadership is beginning to make a difference in improving pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans to provide greater opportunities for pupils to write within all areas of the curriculum are fully implemented
- there is a more consistent approach to planning learning activities in subjects other than English and mathematics
- teachers have the same high expectations of the quantity and quality of work that pupils produce in other subjects as they do in English and mathematics
- the new approaches in mathematics are built upon to ensure that there are opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills consistently across the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Joan Beale

Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held discussions with you about the key lines of enquiry for this inspection, the school's self-evaluation of its performance, plans for future improvement and information about current pupils' progress and attainment. I met with subject leaders and two governors. I spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone. We visited all classrooms together to observe teaching, learning and assessment, and looked at the work in pupils' books in a range of subjects. I also saw pupils learning in the outdoor forest school area.

I met with a group of pupils to talk about their experiences at school and also talked more informally with pupils in lessons and at break time. I scrutinised safeguarding policies and practice, including systems for safe recruitment of staff.

The views of 31 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View were taken into account, as well as 28 responses using the free-text service. I also considered the views of the parents I spoke with during the inspection. Additionally, I looked at three responses to the staff questionnaire.