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Debbie Knight
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Knight

Short inspection of Sexton's Manor Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 June 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 May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Working closely with your leadership team and governing body, you have created a very positive environment which some parents and carers describe using words such as 'fabulous'. It is clear that pupils and their well-being are central to your vision of education in order to get the best from them. In their responses to your question to pupils about what they thought you wanted for them, pupils clearly understand your expectations. For example, one pupil said 'that we all matter' and another that you want pupils to 'keep on learning and improving'.

You and your leadership team have high expectations of pupils' learning and achievement and these are well communicated to the staff team. The vibrant displays around the school and in classrooms reflect an interesting, relevant and rich curriculum. Important values underpin the curriculum and support the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding highly effectively. This is evident in the work of the school's 'eco-warriors' and the exciting modelling from recycled materials such as the life-size igloo from milk bottles in the school's reception area. The 'forest schools' work, where pupils learn outdoors in the woodland area, supports the development of their personal and social skills extremely well, especially for pupils who have significant social and emotional needs.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. Most behave well

and, in lessons, focus effectively on their work. A minority of parents are, however, not happy with behaviour in school and are critical of the management of other areas of the school's work. This partly reflects their response to a recent issue which the school dealt with appropriately, taking support and advice from the local authority. It is also a result of parents not always knowing how you and the school are dealing with what are sometimes quite challenging issues of behaviour. The majority of parents are positive about the school and many are fulsome in their praise of the work it does, especially in supporting and nurturing pupils to enable them to achieve their best.

The school has developed its educational provision well since its last inspection and focused effectively on tackling the issues arising from that inspection. With the effective help and support of the local authority, you and your leaders have widened your outlook and worked more closely with other schools to share ideas and best practice. Pupils have more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects. In addition, you have invested in a much better stock of good-quality literature, which is helping to promote good skills in reading, including comprehension skills. Leaders were also asked to ensure that teachers provided a consistently high level of challenge in lessons. While the level of challenge is now better, there is more to do in relation to extending and deepening pupils' understanding in mathematics and further improving their writing skills.

In moving the school forward, you and your leaders know what needs to be done, and plans for improvement focus on the right priorities. Governors provide strong oversight of the school and have an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. They are actively involved in the work of the school and check how well it is implementing agreed policies and plans. They ask searching questions to hold leaders to account but also support the school in its endeavours to do the best for its pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school has comprehensive procedures for ensuring that pupils are kept safe and well looked after in school. Those with additional needs, and their families where necessary, are given effective support and help, either through the school or through other agencies and professionals.

Any incidents or concerns that are brought to your notice are thoroughly investigated and appropriate action taken. The school maintains good-quality records which enable you to ensure that actions to keep pupils safe and provide support as necessary are followed through. You keep a close eye on attendance and follow up absences quickly and rigorously. Most pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, attend school regularly.

Overall, the leadership team and governors have ensured that all safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose.

Inspection findings

- Before the inspection, I looked at the pupil premium plan and report and found that these were not comprehensive or sharply focused enough on issues for disadvantaged pupils to be effective. The evaluation of the use of funding last year was also not sharp enough to give a clear picture of its effectiveness. This means that governors are not getting a clear enough picture of the use of pupil premium funding. Therefore, during the inspection, I looked at the quality of support provided for disadvantaged pupils and their progress. Most disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics. This is because their individual progress is routinely checked and any who are falling behind or need extra help are well supported. In particular, the support for their personal, social and emotional development appears to be strong and helps them to get ready for learning. Consequently, most disadvantaged pupils are working at, or close to, age-related standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, very few are achieving work of a high standard which exceeds age-related expectations, including by the end of key stage 2.
- The school is developing better methods of evaluating the impact of the range of support being provided to disadvantaged pupils. Your deputy headteacher is gathering together a good range of evidence, including feedback from pupils and staff, to help her identify what is working well and where activities might be less effective. However, this evidence is yet to be collated and analysed in a systematic way to better inform the school and governors about the effectiveness of the school's use of pupil premium funding.
- We looked at the level of challenge for pupils in their learning. This was because results of national curriculum tests at the end of both key stages indicate that fewer pupils than nationally exceed expected standards of work. You are actively working on teachers providing high levels of challenge in the work provided to pupils. For example, in mathematics, you are moving to a different scheme which allows teachers and pupils to think more deeply about mathematical ideas. This was evident in lessons and we saw much good questioning by teachers to probe pupils' understanding and get them to explain and justify their answers. This work has only recently been introduced and is not yet fully embedded across the school.
- Another area of work you are focusing on is to help improve pupils' writing skills so that more pupils are producing writing of higher quality. You are developing extended writing in subjects other than English. Pupils' topic books show that they do not have enough opportunity to apply their writing skills in subjects such as history and geography in order to improve and consolidate these skills. Pupils have better opportunities in science to write about their science work, including experiments, but this is not consistent across the school.
- Writing in the early years is very well developed and has improved since the previous inspection. Staff are making very good use of phonics to promote early writing skills. They are also providing opportunities for children to talk through their ideas and rehearse what they are going to write about before they put pen to paper. As a result, the quality of writing is high and children are keen to produce longer pieces of writing. Children are, therefore, very well prepared for

Year 1.

- We agreed that it was important for children currently in Reception to build on the even better writing skills they are now developing when they move into Year 1.
- Overall, teachers in key stage 1 are building on the good work and improving outcomes from the end of the early years. Results at the end of the early years and in phonics at the end of Year 1 have been on a good rising trend for the past three years, and the good results of last year in both are being sustained this year.
- Given the feedback from parents to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and their written comments, especially about behaviour and safety, we spent some time looking at how the school deals with incidents and reports of bullying. School records show that the school is thorough in how it records and deals with behaviour incidents, including any reports of bullying. Issues of bullying are rare, though pupils sometimes fall out with one another. Some pupils have significant needs, which the school manages well.
- Feedback from pupils and staff was very positive about the school's management of behaviour and that behaviour on a day-to-day basis is good. Pupils recognise that there are a small number of pupils whose challenging behaviour is due to their additional needs and feel that staff manage these pupils' behaviour effectively. Incidents of discriminatory behaviour, such as racism, are very rare indeed. Pupils are very inclusive. They are keen to learn about other cultures and religions and make new pupils who join the school partway through primary years welcome.
- Most parents I spoke to at the end of the school day were happy with the school and the education it provides. They had no issues about pupils' behaviour or safety. Some identified communication as an issue and an area that needed to be improved. A small number echoed some of the written comments, feeling that the school did not take appropriate action on challenging behaviour or manage the negative behaviour from a few pupils well. The school is working hard to ensure that the needs of pupils are addressed and is working with a wide range of external professionals, as well as agencies and parents, to meet individual needs. Governors are well sighted on the challenges the school faces and provide effective support as well as using their frequent visits to the school to check behaviour and the climate for learning. They also speak to pupils during visits to elicit their views. Governors report that the school is calm and orderly, as it was during this inspection.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they improve the quality of planning for pupil premium pupils and make sure that the impact of spending is evaluated more comprehensively
- more pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, produce higher-quality work in English and mathematics by embedding the new approach to mathematics,

and building writing more effectively into the wider curriculum and from the end of the early years

- communication and engagement with parents address their concerns about the school, and behaviour and safety in particular.

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

Gulshanbir Kayembe
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, your deputy headteacher, the key stage 1 leader, five members of the governing body, including the chair and two vice chairs of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and pupils. We visited classrooms together and looked at pupils' work in their books. I examined a range of documents, policies and assessment information. These included safeguarding records, and records of attendance and behaviour. I took account of the Ofsted online questionnaire responses from 41 parents, as well as 36 written responses from parents. In addition, I also spoke to a number of parents and grandparents at the end of the school day as they came to pick up their children and grandchildren from school. I also considered 12 responses to the Ofsted survey for staff.