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Ms Sue Hoyland
Headteacher
Forest Fields Primary and Nursery School
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Dear Ms Hoyland

Short inspection of Forest Fields Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 11 July 2018 with Clive Worrall, Ofsted Inspector, 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

Forest Fields is a big school with an even bigger heart. The 52 languages, diversity of culture and faiths are all celebrated, creating a school that has a welcoming and warm atmosphere. The school population changes almost on a daily basis, but this does not affect the calm and ordered learning environment. The majority of pupils enter school unable to speak English. You and your team have established highly effective systems and strategies to help pupils swiftly to acquire basic English and enable them to access the curriculum. Key members of staff are responsible for nurturing pupils and aiding them to settle quickly into school, which they do well. Pupils, parents and staff are proud of their school. They appreciate the happy, friendly environment, and all enjoy coming to school.

Over the past few years, you have skilfully managed the increase in pupil population, an extensive building programme and a relatively high turnover of staff. You have built a knowledgeable and committed leadership team that understands the complexities of the school and has the necessary skills to drive further improvement. Subject leaders have developed network links with other practitioners and have distributed learning within school, improving practice through a range of professional development opportunities. Teachers and other adults who work in the school have high aspirations for the pupils. They plan lessons carefully, and pupils

are engaged and focused, participate in their learning and are excited by the activities. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning ensure that lessons are productive. You have given a high priority to establishing the 'character curriculum', as you recognise the importance of developing traits such as resilience, perseverance and courage in every child. As a result, older pupils develop confidence and are willing and able to accept roles of responsibility, such as being an 'amigo' to a younger pupil.

Leaders have made good progress towards the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Teachers use carefully chosen questions to encourage pupils to think carefully about what they are learning and to clearly explain reasons for their answers. The most able pupils are engaged in their learning, and the work in books confirms that all pupils are effectively challenged. Significant progress has been made by leaders in increasing opportunities for pupils to work independently. During our visits to lessons, inspectors saw many examples of collaborative learning and pupils thinking creatively about the task they had been assigned. The introduction of learning journals has encouraged writing across a range of subjects. Good gains have been made in the teaching of phonics in key stage 1, and this is giving pupils confidence to write. However, progress is not rapid enough. The language used in writing is often unsophisticated, and there must be a greater focus on enriching pupil vocabulary.

Parents are full of praise for the school. They appreciate the support from all the staff and value the open-door policy with the adults in school. The very few responses on Parent View, combined with the conversations in the morning, are captured by one parent's comment: 'Our children are happy, learning well and most crucially allowed to learn and progress at their own pace, with support and encouragement from teachers who appear to be happy and well supported themselves.'

The members of the governing body have a wide range of skills that are used to enhance the leadership of the school. They have a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use the detailed information you provide, combined with the knowledge gained from their regular visits and meetings, to commend where there have been improvements and robustly challenge progress towards priority areas. Poor attendance continues to be a fundamental area of concern. Over the years, there have been many strategies employed to reduce levels of absence, which have been successful to a degree. You agree that there needs to be a fresh approach to increasing levels of attendance, and this will be essential if pupils are to make progress towards their dreams of becoming 'astrophysicists and surgeons'.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your staff and the members of the governing body give the highest priority to keeping the pupils and community safe. You ensure that policies and procedures are meeting statutory requirements. Diligence is afforded to all records, which are detailed, updated and securely stored. Many families have complex and difficult

lives. Your school and team provide a safe haven for these vulnerable families, often giving immediate sanctuary and identifying the appropriate professional help required. Key members of staff are trained to a very high level, ensuring all members of staff and governors receive relevant safeguarding training. There is a good knowledge of the indicators of abuse, and all staff are trained to recognise the signs of the local safeguarding concerns. Teaching staff are robust in following procedures, and address often very difficult child protection cases with expert knowledge and sensitivity.

During our visit, the behaviour and conduct of the pupils was of a high standard. Pupils explained that they feel safe in school and that they would know who to speak to if anything was worrying them. They are fully aware of the benefits and dangers of the internet, and know how to keep themselves safe online. Parents confirmed through conversations with inspectors, questionnaires given by the school and responses on Parent View that they are confident their children are safe at school. There was a very strong recommendation of the school to other parents from the Parent View responses.

Inspection findings

- Most pupils in school are making strong progress. When pupils undertake all of their education at Forest Fields their progress is above that expected nationally. The extremely high levels of mobility, which are greatest in key stage 1, have a substantial impact on progress and attainment. Tracking systems have been developed so that leaders can analyse individual and group progress from different starting points. Leaders at all levels are skilled at interrogating the assessment information. They quickly identify pupils who need further support and ensure that effective provision is swiftly allocated to help these individuals to make better progress.
- Over the past two years, there has been significant investment in developing reading and phonics throughout the school. A phonics specialist has been employed and, as a result of intensive training, all staff have benefited from advice and support to plan effective reading activities. Consequently, there have been significant improvements in pupils' phonic knowledge and reading skills, particularly in early years and Year 1. The number of pupils needing the phonics intervention in key stage 2 is reducing.
- There has been considerable focus on developing and improving the teaching of mathematics throughout the school. High-quality training, investment in resources and meticulous monitoring of provision by subject leaders have resulted in very strong progress by the end of key stage 2 in 2017, and this has been sustained.
- There has been increased analysis and more effective planning of the provision for disadvantaged pupils this year. A member of staff has been appointed as a champion for this vulnerable group of pupils, who often have complex home lives. These pupils have benefited from the messages of the 'character curriculum' and they have applied many of the attributes in their learning. This, combined with a variety of mentoring programmes and individual tuition, has

resulted in positive progress for disadvantaged pupils.

- Pupils' workbooks confirm that pupils are being given more opportunities to write in different subject areas, but the quality of writing is at the lower end of expectations for each year group. You and your leadership team are aware that, for the majority of pupils, English is only spoken at school and, therefore, their English language acquisition is condensed into the school day. In order to increase their vocabulary and give them the skills to write with greater sophistication, it is essential that pupils are exposed to rich language on a daily basis.
- There is a dedicated member of staff and a surrounding team that focus on the attendance of pupils. The complexities surrounding pupil mobility, as well as the cultural expectations over school attendance, create a significant challenge for the school. Members of staff work closely with families, and there have been some success stories. The percentage of pupils who regularly miss school has reduced, but there is still considerable room for improvement to bring attendance levels nearer to national figures.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- absence levels are improved for all groups of pupils by raising the profile and impact of good attendance across the school community
- there is further development in enriching language skills so that pupils are able to write at a higher standard and with increasing fluency and flair.

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

Yours sincerely

Kate Nash
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, we discussed your own evaluation of the school, and I shared my key lines of enquiry with you. You and your senior leadership team accompanied inspectors as we visited each class, spending a short time in each. We met with several other members of staff, four governors including the chair of the governing body, a group of pupils and a number of parents. We held discussions with different leaders about safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, the curriculum and measuring pupils' progress. We viewed a range of documents and considered information related to attendance and how the pupil premium funding is spent. I

spoke with the school improvement partner. Together with your leadership team, we looked at a wide range of pupils' work. I examined the school's website to check that it meets the requirements for the publication of specified information. I analysed the 17 responses to Ofsted's questionnaires for parents and 35 staff responses and 16 pupil responses to the questionnaire.