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Mr Mark Currell
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Dear Mr Currell

Short inspection of Roade Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 July 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 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Parents and carers value the work of the school. They are actively encouraged to play an active role in their children's learning. Pupils explain the importance of respect and responsibility. They appreciate how learning about other faiths and cultures broadens their understanding of the wider world. Pupils told me that they are happy to come to school and they are appreciative of the range of clubs, visits and visitors planned to encourage their interest. They spoke enthusiastically about the challenge in preparing a comedy to perform to the whole school and their families.

Pupils are confident, polite and articulate. They speak passionately about their involvement in local events, proudly recalling their involvement in the commemoration of Armistice Day in the local church. To complement the school's drive to promote reading for pleasure, pupils are involved with the community in sustaining the local library. Pupils are proud of the different roles and responsibilities they take on, such as leading fundraising activities for local and national charities. They value the contribution they make to the smooth running of the school. For example, the school council's recent recommendations for improving the play area were implemented. Older children have a role as play leaders to support younger children, and this adds to their enjoyment of playtime. They are confident that concerns are dealt with quickly and effectively.

Teachers provide displays which support pupils' learning effectively. In classrooms

and around the school, pupils' work is celebrated and presented to a high standard. Pupils speak highly of the staff. One pupil said: 'Our relationships with teachers are important. They work at it and really help us.' Pupils are motivated learners. They told me that they enjoy the opportunity to challenge themselves.

Displays around the school remind pupils of its core values. Individuals' endeavours and achievements through such activities as sport and music are celebrated. One pupil said: 'We are encouraged to have a go. It doesn't matter if you get it wrong. That's part of learning.' You have fostered positive relationships with parents, carers and members of the local community, who speak highly of your leadership of the school. One parent said, 'This is an awesome school. Teachers really know the children well.'

The governing body provides effective support to the school. Governors have a range of relevant skills and experience to support the work of the school. Governors have an understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They are enthusiastic and highly motivated to ensure that the school further improves. The governing body has ensured that governors are well trained and receive professional development in their role. They make regular visits to check on the school's work towards meeting its priorities.

Since the last inspection, you have identified key areas requiring further improvement. You have ensured that staff have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons. You have introduced an effective tracking system and senior leaders check progress, through regular meetings, so they can improve the quality of teaching. Where pupils need to catch up, you provide additional support swiftly.

Over time, you have developed your team's confidence, knowledge and skills through coaching opportunities. As a skilful leader, you know that such opportunities need adapting to ensure that the team's expertise continues to grow. You have ensured that teachers have opportunities to share their expertise, ideas and knowledge with each other.

In order to improve teaching and learning, you have successfully introduced to the school a bespoke approach to teaching reading to develop pupils' skills in deeper analysis of texts. You have also introduced an approach to teaching mathematics in key stage 1 and key stage 2 to develop pupils' reasoning skills. These recently introduced refinements are not fully embedded.

During our tour of the school, we noted that in some classes in key stage 1 and 2, teachers were not designing tasks with sufficient challenge to ensure that the most able pupils, including the most-able disadvantaged pupils, make the progress of which they are capable in mathematics and writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. High-quality, detailed records show that you manage concerns swiftly and understand the

procedures for referring pupils to other agencies where there is concern. You manage complex cases with competence. You use your breadth of knowledge well to engage a range of external support to meet pupils' needs. The school's systems and procedures are robust.

Leaders, including members of the governing body, maintain a robust safeguarding culture across the school. Staff receive timely and up-to-date training in child protection. They are knowledgeable about their responsibilities. They are vigilant and confident to report if they have a concern that a pupil may be at risk.

The school administrator ensures that all the appropriate checks on staff, volunteers and visitors are made to support the safety of the school and the pupils and to meet statutory requirements. Your record-keeping is well organised and records are kept securely. Members of the governing body make thorough checks on all safeguarding practices. Policies are reviewed and updated regularly.

Most parents spoken with, and most of those who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children are happy to come to school and feel secure. Pupils feel safe and receive regular reminders about keeping safe online. They know how the school keeps them safe. They receive visitors to support the work of the school such as the Life Education Bus, the police and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

Inspection findings

- Recently, you introduced a system for teachers to assess pupils' attainment and progress at key points through the year. Your latest assessment information shows that the majority of pupils are achieving standards at least in line with expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You and other leaders have introduced a bespoke approach to the teaching of reading across the school. You recognised that some pupils who had performed strongly in reading in key stage 1 went on to perform less well in key stage 2. You identified that, at key stage 1, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard and the proportion of disadvantaged pupils working at greater depth in reading was below the national average, in 2017. You are determined that the approach taken to teaching reading will help pupils develop and refine skills in analysing texts and answering questions.
- Together we observed evidence in school that where this bespoke approach is being applied effectively the necessary skills in reading are being developed well. For example, in key stage 1, we observed a teacher reading a book to a class whilst skilfully prompting debate about the book's content. Pupils were effectively drawing on their knowledge and understanding to communicate empathy with the characters in the story and drawing on the text to persuade others of their opinions. We noted that not all staff are delivering the programme with the desired fluency and accuracy.
- During the inspection, we looked at pupils' work in books and on display. In key stage 2, pupils write regularly and sometimes at length. Pupils enjoy writing for

different purposes. For example, we noted good-quality fiction writing based on a recent school visit to a zoo. Pupils were attributing human emotions and behaviour to describe a wild animal's natural environment. Where pupils were communicating their ideas effectively, spelling, punctuation and grammar were accurate. However, opportunities for such challenge are not consistently provided throughout the school. There are occasions when the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is not of a high enough standard to support pupils in communicating their ideas clearly.

- The school has reviewed the teaching of mathematics across the school. Published information in 2017 showed that in key stage 2 a significant number of high-prior-attaining pupils did not do as well as they should have. At key stage 1, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard was below the national average. In addition, disadvantaged pupils working at greater depth in mathematics was below the national average. You have taken action to identify an appropriate approach to the teaching of mathematics. You have planned for the development of fluency in arithmetic to sit alongside developing pupils' skills in reasoning so pupils will be able to process information and think creatively about solving mathematical problems.
- Published information shows that attendance overall is above the national average. You and the governing body closely monitor pupils' attendance and you have a successful strategy in place to reduce the number of pupils who are absent. You rightly challenge parents to ensure that pupils attend regularly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school has a consistent approach to developing pupils' skills in handwriting so that their work is neat and well presented
- current initiatives are developed and embedded so that more pupils achieve as well as they can in English and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Moore
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you to discuss the school's self-evaluation and my key lines of enquiry. I met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. I met with leaders responsible for English, mathematics, pupil

premium and assessment. I held a discussion with a representative of the local authority. I spoke with pupils during a group discussion and informally during lessons. I observed pupils' conduct around and outside the school. I spoke with parents at the end of the school day. Jointly, you and I visited a range of classes to observe learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work. In addition, I checked the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the school's record of recruitment checks on staff. I evaluated the school's documentation about pupils' achievement and attendance and looked at school improvement plans. I took account of the 111 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, the 28 responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and the 16 responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.