

4 December 2018

Mrs Julie Vaccari
Headteacher
Springbank Primary School
Peacock Drive
Eastwood
Nottingham
Nottinghamshire
NG16 3HW

Dear Mrs Vaccari

Short inspection of Springbank Primary School

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

This school continues to be good.

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

You have very clear goals in achieving the best for the pupils in your care and the staff that you lead. You have invested in a range of approaches, including:

- counselling support for pupils, parents, carers and staff
- a 'sensory room' designed to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) manage their emotions
- a fully equipped science laboratory, 'Phiz lab', that enables teachers to better explore scientific ideas with pupils and is also used by other local primary schools
- a developing woodland area for pupils to explore the natural world.

You and the leadership team have an accurate view of the school's strengths and what needs to be done to make further improvements. Your work with other school leaders across the country helps you to identify promising developments in teaching and the curriculum. You trial changes to these areas and check whether they are effective. For example, you have used specialist teachers to increase the depth and pace of learning.

In 2017, the proportions of pupils attaining the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 exceeded those seen nationally. Very

early, unconfirmed information indicates that this looks set to continue in 2018. This early information also indicates that the proportions of disadvantaged pupils who have attained the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 exceeded those seen by other pupils nationally.

At the beginning of the day, I visited all the classrooms and outdoor areas with you. We saw the preparations made for teaching in the early years. Your staff made sure that every activity in the early years was engaging and was focused on an area of learning. The spaces between classrooms are used to encourage learning, and to promote the school's and British values. The displays also celebrate pupils' work, such as the impact of the school's partnership with, and fundraising for, a school in Uganda. Another example was pupils' work on Remembrance Day, which included the 'Poppies are red' music CD that won third prize in a competition run by the British Legion. Pupils had settled to work quickly in every classroom that we visited.

Pupils who spoke with me during the day told me that they enjoy coming to school. I observed and talked with pupils during breaktime. They played well together and made good use of the equipment made available for them.

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school and felt that their child is happy. A small number would like you to ensure that the newsletter is kept on the school website as well as being emailed to them.

I was unable to meet with governors on the day of the inspection because they had commitments that they could not change. You provided me with minutes of several governing body meetings. These records showed that governors ask searching questions about leaders' actions and their impact. For instance, governors had questioned how the school improved the attainment of pupils, how staff met specific medical needs, and what the impact of the pupil premium strategy had been.

At the previous inspection, leaders were asked to raise the attainment of pupils in mathematics in both key stages 1 and 2. I considered the key stage 2 results in mathematics and discussed them with you. Pupils had made progress that was above average in 2016 and 2017, and the provisional information about progress in 2018 is that it is average for all pupils, including for disadvantaged pupils. You have ensured that teachers accurately identify what pupils do and do not know. Teachers then ensure that the pupils' understanding of the mathematics is correct before beginning another topic. As a result, pupils' understanding is embedded and they can make secure progress.

I focused on pupils in key stage 1 who had attained the early learning goal in mathematics at the end of the early years. You and your leaders have identified pupils who could attain a higher standard by the end of key stage 2. I saw these pupils working as a group, developing confidence in their basic mathematical skills and being asked to solve more difficult problems. Teachers understood the mathematics well and were confident teaching it.

I explored pupils' attainment data with you and the mathematics leader. A high proportion of pupils meet the standard expected of their age in key stage 1. However, in line with data from the past few years, too small a proportion of pupils currently in key stage 1 have begun to work at greater depth in mathematics. You have identified the pupils with the potential for strong progress, but they are not yet confident using the skills they need.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team and governors ensure that all safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose. You have ensured that robust systems and procedures are in place. There is effective training for staff that ensures they are aware of the latest safeguarding guidance. Staff act appropriately on concerns about pupils' safety. Records are detailed and secure. Leaders are fully aware of the local child protection issues, including 'Prevent' duty and county lines.

Leaders act to minimise time lost by pupils. They take a range of actions to assist and encourage parents to reduce avoidable absence from school. You use all the statutory powers at your disposal to make sure pupils are not disadvantaged by poor attendance. Overall absence and persistent absence are consistently below the national averages. You very rarely exclude pupils and incidents of racist, homophobic or other discriminatory behaviour are also rare. A very large majority of parents believe that the school keeps their children safe. All the pupils I spoke with told me that they feel safe in school. Several pupils told me that most pupils behaved well, but when they did not, teachers dealt with them effectively.

Inspection findings

- Boys' attainment in writing in key stage 2 in 2017 was above the national average. Provisional data suggests this was sustained in 2018. In particular, the proportion of boys who attained the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 was well above the national average. I asked you what had been done to achieve these results, and whether a high proportion of boys currently at the school were attaining well in writing.
- You told me that leaders have designed the writing curriculum to build on exciting experiences and on learning in other areas of the curriculum. In addition, several teachers work with a group of pupils to develop their writing, drafting and finalising their work. I watched different parts of this process take place. Boys I spoke with recalled a project from the previous year that helped them in their current writing. Other boys were creating a collage as a starting point for them to write creatively and explained how it helped them to prepare to write. I observed another group of eight pupils engaged in examining the impact of their first writing draft. They discussed it with each other and the teacher, reworking it and improving its impact. The boys I observed were really enjoying the writing process and were practising and developing their skills. Several boys were demonstrating the skills required to reach the higher standard.

- Current attainment in writing remains high, but less so than in 2017 and when compared with provisional data from the last academic year.
- You were asked at the last inspection to increase pupils' access to a wide range of books to increase their knowledge of authors and different types of writing and to help them develop a love of reading for pleasure. I observed pupils reading at several times of the school day, across a wide range of classes. Pupils confidently talked to me about the books they were reading, what they enjoyed about them and what other books they had read. The pupils I talked with had favourite authors and enjoyed different types of books, including fiction and non-fiction.
- From my observations, I was able to see why you are confident that teachers consistently encourage pupils to read more widely and to read more challenging books.
- Pupils made average progress in reading at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 and above average progress in 2017. Early indications are that pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 in the last academic year was average. A high proportion of pupils are working at the standard expected for their age in key stages 1 and 2. In addition, pupils are making strong progress and working above the standard expected for their age in the current upper key stage 2.
- I listened to a small group of pupils from key stage 1 read. The most able pupils were meeting the greater depth standard for pupils at the end of key stage 1. Your own assessment information shows that the proportion of pupils developing the skills at greater depth is increasingly in line with the proportion who do so nationally.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a higher proportion of pupils make strong progress in mathematics in key stage 1, so that the proportion attaining a greater depth of understanding in this subject is in line with, or is above, the national average.

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

Yours sincerely

Clive Worrall
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and shared my lines of enquiry. I also met with leaders responsible for English, mathematics, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and assessment. I held a telephone conversation with the school's local authority adviser. I scrutinised a range of documents, including those relating to pupils' progress, the school's improvement planning, self-evaluation and documents relating to attendance and safeguarding. I visited all key stages with you to see the learning that was taking place. We observed groups of key stage 1 pupils learning mathematics and reading and key stage 2 pupils learning writing. I considered the responses of parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and read all free-text comments. There were no electronic responses from staff to Ofsted's questionnaire, but I looked at the collated 2017 feedback that leaders had gathered against similar questions. I observed children's behaviour in lessons and as they moved about the school. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information.