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11 December 2018

Mrs Sarah Campbell
Headteacher
Spring Gardens Primary School
Brightman Road
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Tyne and Wear
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Dear Mrs Campbell

Short inspection of Spring Gardens Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 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 December 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.**

Spring Gardens Primary School is a warm and welcoming school, with a vibrant indoor and outdoor learning environment. Displays of pupils' work provide examples of the rich curriculum that is experienced by pupils. You have established a supportive leadership team whose members are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Staff are proud to work at the school. You and your deputy headteacher promote a positive climate in school. As a result, staff feel well supported. All staff who completed Ofsted's online staff questionnaire stated that they are treated fairly and with respect.

The parents and carers who shared their views with me on the morning of the inspection thought that the school was a safe and caring environment. They were appreciative of the staff, describing them as approachable and friendly. One parent commented, 'The support the teachers give the children is always attentive and nurturing.' Parents also enjoyed their involvement in the recent enrichment week about health and well-being, which included yoga and healthy eating workshops. A small number of parents thought that communication from school could be improved. They provided these views through the Ofsted free-text service.

Pupils are articulate, friendly and confident learners. They appreciate the wider curriculum opportunities available, for example the circus skills workshop, after-school clubs, breakfast club, sports coaches and the choir.

You and your leaders have responded positively to addressing the areas for improvement from the last inspection. You were asked to improve the attainment and progress of pupils in key stage 1, particularly in mathematics and for the most able. You have, rightly, made this a priority since the last inspection. The mathematics leader checks regularly on the progress pupils make and the standard of their work in books. Together with the key stage 1 leader, they hold regular meetings with staff. The information gathered is used effectively to identify pupils who require further challenge. The proportion of pupils who attain the higher standard in mathematics at the end of Year 2 is now above the national average.

Inspectors also asked you to make the best possible use of information collected for different groups of pupils to compare progress and standards over time. You now have detailed systems in place for leaders and managers to collate information about pupils' progress and the standards pupils reach. These systems include measuring the progress of all pupil groups including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In 2018, good progress was made by disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics across key stage 2. Pupils with SEND made good progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. Although progress is strong for these groups of pupils, the standards that they reach by the end of Year 6 are below the national average. Therefore, you have identified continuing to improve pupils' progress and standards in your current school improvement plan.

Governing body meetings are held regularly, and they are well attended. Governors have established their roles and they know the school well. They visit the school frequently to check that you are addressing the school improvement priorities effectively. For example, the governor with a special interest in pupils with SEND has met with the special educational needs coordinator to review the impact of interventions put in place by the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Suitable records are kept and updated regularly for vulnerable pupils. All incidents and accidents which are recorded have relevant detail and include leaders' actions to investigate. You make appropriate checks to ensure that newly appointed staff are fit to work with children. One governor, with a special interest in safeguarding, periodically checks that the systems for this are up to date and thorough.

Pupils are knowledgeable about staying safe in, and outside of, school and when using modern technologies. They recognise that they have a responsibility to learn how to keep themselves safe and they could talk to me confidently about what they had learned in anti-bullying week.

While the culture of safeguarding is appropriate, a small number of pupils and parents expressed concerns during the inspection about bullying issues. Pupils say that any bullying is dealt with by the school staff but voiced concerns that incidents of this kind are too frequent. School records checked during the inspection show that the school leaders record these types of incidents and take appropriate action, but they are continuing to happen.

Inspection findings

- You have made a concerted effort to improve attendance, which has been below the national average for several years, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has risen over four years and is significantly high for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders use rewards to recognise good attendance and have issued warning letters and fines to parents for unacceptable absence. You and your governing body have very recently taken decisive action to introduce a new policy to address the high proportion of holidays taken in term time.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception has been broadly in line with the national average for the last two years. Children join your Reception class from a high number of pre-school providers. They join with skills that are below those typical for their age, particularly in self-confidence and self-awareness. The effective routines and procedures in place support the children and consequently they settle into the school quickly. Progress from starting points to the end of Reception show that the children make strong progress in most areas. There has been a rising trend in the proportion exceeding the expected standard and a three-year increase in the proportion of disadvantaged children reaching the expected standard. The recently appointed leader carries out detailed assessments and has an accurate view of the strengths, already addressing where improvements are needed.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has been below the national average. Pupils catch up to obtain the required standard by the end of Year 2, in line with the national average. There is a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics and the books pupils read are matched appropriately to the sounds that they are learning. In some phonics lessons that we visited, we noticed that some errors made by pupils were not addressed immediately within the lesson.
- Over the last three years, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who reach the expected standards and the higher standards by the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics has been lower than the national average. However, the progress they made across key stage 2 in 2018 was strong. Your own assessments show that across the school, most disadvantaged pupils meet their individual targets set and the work in books supports this.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards by the end of key stage 1 was below the national average in reading and writing. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 were also below the national average. When we visited classrooms

together, we agreed that sometimes the pupils spend too long in lessons doing what they already know and can do. Work set in some lessons does not enable pupils to move to more challenging work quickly enough. This was also evident in the work that we looked at together in pupils' books. You and your deputy headteacher had recently identified this within your own systems to check on teaching and learning and agree that there is further work to do to provide appropriate challenge for all pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to work on improving attendance and reduce persistent absence for all pupils, but particularly those who are disadvantaged
- practices to identify any bullying in the school should be reviewed in partnership with pupils and parents to reduce the number of incidents occurring
- teachers set work for all pupils, especially the most able, which is sufficiently challenging, to increase the proportion of pupils who attain the higher standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Aitchison
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, your senior and middle leaders and your business manager. I met with three governors, scrutinised governing body minutes of meetings and met with your school improvement partner from the local authority. You and I visited classes across the school to observe teaching and learning. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktime. Together with your deputy headteacher, we looked at samples of pupils' work in writing, mathematics and the wider curriculum. You, your deputy headteacher and early years leader also met with me to evaluate pupils' attainment and progress. I looked at a range of documentation relating to safeguarding, attendance, leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance and plans for further development.

I listened to four pupils read from Year 2 and Year 3. I took account of the 14 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including parents' free-text responses. I met with several parents at the beginning of the school day. I considered the 12 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the Ofsted questionnaire for pupils, but I met with a group of seven

pupils from key stages 1 and 2 and talked to pupils at breaktime.