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Mrs Sarah Plaskitt
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Plaskitt

Short inspection of Snitterfield Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 December 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. A lot has changed over that time, including a completely new leadership team and many changes to staff and governors. You became executive headteacher for the three schools within the Stratford Rural School Federation in September 2015. In April 2018, you also took on the role of head of school at Snitterfield.

Along with the governors, you and the staff have a clear vision and commitment to provide the highest-quality education for your pupils. You provide strong leadership and have high expectations of what both staff and pupils can achieve. Together with the governors, you and the senior teacher have an accurate understanding of the school's current strengths and priorities for further improvement. You are taking appropriate actions to address these aspects, for example by providing relevant training and mentoring for staff.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and show an enthusiasm for learning. They spoke excitedly about imminent visitors and trips to support their history topics on the Romans and the Victorians. Teachers successfully adapt the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of their pupils. While this is appropriate, leaders must carefully check that all aspects of the national curriculum are taught and that pupils' knowledge and skills are developed effectively.

As they get older, pupils have increased opportunities to take on responsibilities,

including as house captains and buddies for children in the Reception class. Pupils from all classes can represent their year group on the school council or eco-committee. These opportunities to support others help to prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education.

At the previous inspection, the school was asked to ensure that teachers set tasks which are appropriate for pupils' needs, and that pupils know how to improve their work. Regular reviews and assessments across the year enable teachers and leaders to monitor pupils' progress closely and to adapt their planning as necessary. This approach helps to address any gaps in pupils' learning and provides them with appropriate levels of challenge. Pupils are clear about what they are learning in each lesson, and teachers provide feedback in a variety of ways to help pupils maximise their progress. Outcomes are improving across the school. Attainment is above average, particularly in reading. However, pupils' ability to write across a wide range of subjects or at length is not as well developed.

Leaders' communication with parents has improved, and the introduction of an electronic application to facilitate contact between the school and parents, fortnightly newsletters, regular parents' meetings, information events and opportunities for parents to attend celebration assemblies have all helped. Almost all parents spoken to were positive about the availability and approachability of staff. You also work effectively with families who wish to educate their children partly at school and partly at home (flexi-schooling).

A minority of parents expressed concerns about the impact of financial constraints and restructuring of staffing on the school's capacity to support pupils' individual needs, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have ensured that support for vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND or the small number who are eligible for pupil premium funding, has improved recently. However, the attainment of some of these pupils is not as high as it should be in some year groups and subjects. Governors are taking appropriate actions to try to minimise the effect of any financial challenges.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is an effective culture of safeguarding in the school, and you see children's welfare as of paramount importance. You and the staff ensure that the school is a safe environment for pupils. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils said that they feel safe in school because there is always someone to talk to. As one pupil said: 'Everyone knows everyone. It is like a family here.' Pupils are taught how to stay safe, for example when using the internet, riding a bike or on school trips.

Staff have regular and appropriate training to help them understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe from harm. They are clear about what they should do if they have any safeguarding concerns. You work with external agencies as necessary to follow up any concerns about a pupil's welfare. Governors understand their role in overseeing the effectiveness of safeguarding and in

monitoring the effectiveness of school procedures.

Inspection findings

- You and the staff have taken decisive action to improve pupils' achievement across the school. In 2018, attainment was above the national average in all subject areas at the end of both key stages 1 and 2. Pupils also achieved well at the higher standards expected for their age in reading and mathematics. You credit a number of these improvements to changes in your curriculum.
- Over the last two years, you have introduced a new approach to the teaching of reading. One member of staff described this as having made a 'tremendous difference' to the standard of reading across the school. There has been an increased focus on developing pupils' vocabulary and comprehension skills through the use of high-quality texts. Pupils show a love of reading and talk positively about the books that they have read. Teachers feel that this approach has also had a positive impact on the quality of pupils' writing. However, the standard of pupils' writing is not consistent across all subjects, and pupils do not develop their stamina by writing at length.
- In mathematics lessons, teachers increasingly encourage pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems and to explain their reasoning. This is having a positive impact on pupils' confidence and enjoyment of the subject. Pupils are able to choose activities targeted at different levels of ability in mathematics lessons. This helps to ensure that pupils are challenged according to their needs.
- The curriculum is taught through a range of exciting topics. These are often linked to visits or visitors, which help to bring the curriculum to life. Leaders encourage teachers to review and adapt topics to better reflect pupils' abilities and increase levels of engagement. However, this means that there is not necessarily consistent coverage of all aspects of the national curriculum. Leaders are currently mapping teachers' planning against the national curriculum, but more could be done to ensure that the curriculum builds effectively on pupils' knowledge and skills in all subjects.
- Small numbers of pupils in each cohort mean that headline figures can vary quite considerably from one year to the next. However, the majority of pupils are making good progress. While this is positive, you are not complacent about outcomes and you are aware that some pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable, are not yet achieving as well as they should.
- Since April 2018, when you became head of school and the special educational needs coordinator took up post, the school has improved the quality of support available for pupils with SEND and those eligible for pupil premium. Following a review of systems, you are now confident that pupils' needs are being met more effectively. Actions are taken to address needs on an individual basis, for example with support for social and emotional difficulties, in the development of reading skills or with access to music lessons. Leaders also make better use of external agencies to assess and support individual pupils. Although the majority of vulnerable pupils are making good progress, too few pupils are making strong

enough progress to narrow the gaps in attainment between themselves and their peers.

- Following a dip in outcomes in the Reception class in 2017, a new early years leader was appointed. Together, you have high expectations for what the children can achieve. Children now make good progress and standards have improved. Assessments are completed promptly when children join the school, and this information is used to identify their strengths and the next steps needed to move their learning forward. New staff have received training, and they are clear on how to support the children effectively. Both indoor and outdoor classroom areas provide positive learning environments and encourage the children to make independent choices across a broad range of activities. There is a strong focus on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills.
- Historically your headline attendance figure appears to be low. This is partly due to the pupils who are flexi-schooled. The days when these pupils are taught at home are included in the school's overall figures as authorised absences. When this is taken into consideration, overall attendance figures are in line with the national average.
- You have raised the importance of good attendance among both pupils and parents, and you have considerably reduced the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent. The procedures you and your staff follow, including contacting parents on the first day of absence, help to ensure that pupils are safe and not at risk of going missing from education.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND and those eligible for pupil premium, are supported to make strong progress and narrow the gaps in attainment between them and other pupils nationally
- the curriculum covers all aspects of the national curriculum, building effectively on pupils' knowledge and skills
- pupils develop their sustained writing skills and are able to apply them across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Crooks
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the senior teacher and other members of staff. I met with representatives of the governing body, including the vice-chair of governors. I talked with some parents at the start of the day and with some pupils, both formally and informally.

Together, we visited all classes where we observed teaching and learning, spoke to pupils and looked at the work in some pupils' books. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. I scrutinised several documents, including your school self-evaluation, assessment information and documents relating to safeguarding.

I took account of 30 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 21 free-text responses.