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Mrs Charley Oldham
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Dear Mrs Oldham

Short inspection of Cogenhoe Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 31 January 2019, 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 second short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in July 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school has been through a period of upheaval, particularly in the last 18 months. Since your appointment as headteacher in April 2018, you have been quick to act on the areas for development. Your knowledge of the school has enabled you to accurately assess what needs to improve and you have swiftly put in place actions to bring about improvements. You and the senior leadership team are working closely with staff to enable them to develop their skills. Your systems for monitoring school improvement are robust and informative. You and your staff are not complacent about the speed of improvement.

In the last inspection report, you were asked to improve pupils' writing skills in subjects other than English. You have ensured that different genres are taught through topic work, and writing is a focus during whole-school 'wow weeks'. You were also asked to focus on the progress that disadvantaged pupils make. 'Monday motivation' sessions help pupils get ready for learning and overcome any concerns that may have arisen from the weekend. Staff support disadvantaged pupils with homework and you provide access to technology that they may not have at home. You have focused on the development of disadvantaged pupils' personal welfare as well as academic needs. You regularly share targets and progress with parents and carers, which is helping to ensure that you meet pupils' needs.

Staff are appreciative of the support that leaders provide for them. They are proud to be part of the school team and believe in doing the best they can for the pupils

at the school. Staff are keen to participate in training and development to improve their skills. Teachers and teaching assistants have embraced the changes to teaching, learning and assessment. They have high ambitions for pupils and are keen to provide pupils with the best opportunities possible.

Pupils are proud of their school. They know the school's values of courtesy, confidence, compassion, courage, curiosity and pride. They understand that these values are central to helping them succeed, with one saying that they will help them 'get far in life'. Staff encourage pupils to be community-minded. They regularly fundraise, and pupils in Year 6 collect items for a local food bank.

Pupils have a good understanding of different cultures and religions. They appreciate the visitors who come to the school, including a local Reverend and Sikh leader, who help them to understand how religions are the same and different. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe; this includes while online. Pupils know what they would do if they were concerned when using social media or when playing online games.

Pupils behave well at school. The recent introduction of the red and yellow card system has ensured that all staff, including lunchtime supervisors, have equal status when managing behaviour. Pupils say that there are rarely incidents of poor behaviour or bullying. Where possible, pupils try to sort out problems with their friends, but they know a member of staff will help them if needed. You and the senior leaders monitor the very small number of incidents of poor behaviour carefully and put actions in place to prevent incidents reoccurring.

Parents are positive about the work of the school. They feel that their children make good progress and receive the support needed when necessary. Parents welcome the quality and variety of extra-curricular clubs provided for pupils. Parents believe that their children are well looked after and are safe. Parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities say that their children are well supported. One parent commented that staff develop pupils' strengths as well as those areas they need help with.

Governors are committed to ensuring that the new leadership team receives the support and challenge needed to help them continue to drive improvements at the school. They provided staff with stability and reassurance during a period of turbulence. Now that a secure senior leadership team is in place, governors are aware of the areas for development and are committed to ensuring that pupils receive the best possible education. Governors understand safeguarding procedures at the school and are aware of the need to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school's designated safeguarding leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the needs of pupils. They are committed to ensuring that safeguarding procedures are compliant with statutory guidance, robust and fit for purpose. They

complete and act on regular audits of the school's procedures.

The designated safeguarding leaders have made sure that records are clear, with actions following incidents recorded effectively. Leaders have been rigorous in following up concerns with local agencies and have sourced additional support for families through health services, education welfare and local charities.

The school's staff support vulnerable pupils and families well. The school's emotional literacy support worker provides drop-in sessions for parents to discuss any concerns. Additional support includes family cookery and book talk sessions. Pupils receive support for bereavement, attachment concerns and how to keep themselves safe.

Inspection findings

- The development of pupils' writing has been a focus of the school's leadership team. Teachers use strategies successfully to develop pupils' writing. Teaching assistants provide additional support for some pupils to help them develop their writing skills further.
- Teachers have analysed pupils' grammar and punctuation knowledge and use this to target gaps in knowledge, and ensure that pupils know how to use this in their writing. Regular moderation with local schools and with staff in different year groups helps to secure the judgements of class teachers when assessing pupils' writing skills.
- Teachers expect pupils to demonstrate their best writing in all subjects. The 'book brilliance' contract for pupils has maintained high standards of presentation. When looking in pupils' workbooks, we saw evidence of writing across the curriculum. There was no discernible difference in presentation across a range of subjects.
- You have recently focused on developing pupils' reading skills. Pupils are gaining greater confidence when reading. However, due to inconsistent assessment in the past, a small number of the most able pupils are not making as much progress as they should. The previous approach to developing pupils' reading skills has not provided the most able pupils with the skills to infer and deduce from more complex texts.
- You have encouraged pupils to develop a love for reading and reading for pleasure. You are beginning to foster a culture where adults encourage pupils to try new and different books, and to persevere when reading longer texts.
- The school's 'book talk' approach is helping pupils to recognise the skills they need when reading a range of texts. You have provided support for teachers to use quality texts that are helping to develop pupils' reading skills.
- In lessons, we observed pupils using different skills to help them understand a range of texts. For example, in Year 3 pupils were considering how different texts reflected modern society. In Years 4 and 5, teachers encouraged older pupils to develop confidence and resilience by standing and explaining their responses with clarity to the rest of the class.

- The senior leadership team has responded effectively to the fall in progress in mathematics in 2018. You concluded that the programme for mathematics was not providing pupils with enough opportunities to develop their mathematical skills through problem solving and reasoning.
- You have begun to implement a new approach to the teaching of mathematics. This includes joining a local 'maths hub' to support the training and development of teachers and teaching assistants.
- In lessons, the developing approach to mathematics was evident. In the Reception Class, adults encouraged children to use the vocabulary 'part and whole' when exploring number sentences. In Year 3, pupils were considering the use of the equals sign to reinforce mathematical thinking and understanding.
- In pupils' workbooks, we saw that some pupils were not provided with enough opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. Due to inaccurate assessment in the past, a very small number of pupils with high prior attainment are not making as much progress as they should.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of mathematics is developed to ensure that pupils have secure knowledge and skills and are able to demonstrate these through mathematical reasoning and problem-solving activities
- pupils' reading skills enable them to infer and deduce when reading more complex texts
- the most able pupils are provided with sufficient challenge to enable them to make the progress they are capable of.

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

Helen Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the deputy headteacher. I spoke with six members of the governing body. I spoke with the mathematics and writing leaders. I spoke with a group of pupils from Reception to Year 6, as well as pupils in lessons and on the playground at breaktime. You and I toured the school together and observed learning taking place during the morning.

During our tour of the school, I scrutinised a selection of pupils' workbooks. I examined a range of the school's documentation, including the self-evaluation document, improvement plan and documents relating to safeguarding. I considered published and internal information about pupils' attainment and progress.

I considered the views of parents, including the 36 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I analysed the 21 responses to the staff survey.