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27 February 2019

Julie Forshew
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Dear Mrs Forshew

Short inspection of Nathaniel Newton Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 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 first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are always looking forward, considering ways to refine and improve what you do. You and other senior leaders are reflective, taking a strategic approach to any change that is made. Over time, you have developed a team of strong committed leaders at all levels who strive to ensure that every pupil has a positive experience of school. Pupils are nurtured and cared for very well, while developing the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in the future.

Since the last inspection, the school has become full three-form entry, and new staff have joined the school. You and governors have managed this growth successfully, without losing the caring ethos and high expectations. In fact, outcomes over this period have continued to rise across the school, as a result of your strong leadership and the continued good quality of teaching.

You empower others and ensure that every member of staff plays their part. You are skilled at growing leaders from within. Roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability are clear. Staff share your vision and want every child to succeed. The commitment to staff development is clear. Staff value the opportunities to develop their skills and deepen their knowledge. This in turn ensures that learning is carefully planned to meet the different needs of pupils. You work with all leaders to make regular checks on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. Feedback to teachers is open and honest. It is focused on ensuring high standards and consistency across the school. A comprehensive cycle of school improvement is

embedded. This ensures that school self-evaluation is accurate.

The school is calm and orderly with a strong learning focus. Pupils learn to get along with each other as well as learning to develop skills and knowledge across a range of subjects. In classrooms, pupils cooperate well and try hard. Behaviour is good, because pupils know what is expected. Pupils with significant behaviour difficulties are managed well. Pupils are supported to develop positive attitudes to learning. They say that they enjoy their work. Parents agree that their children like school and comment on the good progress they make. They say that children are safe and well cared for.

You addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection step by step, embedding the necessary changes in order to raise standards. Pupils now choose the level of challenge in their work. It may be 'mild', 'spicy' or 'hot', with some pupils pushing themselves to access the 'volcano challenge'. Expectations have been raised and more pupils reach greater depth in their work, particularly in reading and mathematics. You continue to keep writing as a focus for improvement, in order to close the gap between different groups of pupils. As a result of a new, consistent approach to the teaching of phonics, more pupils now reach the expected standard. Pupils make better rates of progress building on what they learn in reception. Leadership of early reading skills is particularly strong.

Governors demonstrate a good awareness of the strengths and areas for development across the school. Through a changed meeting structure, they are kept up to date more regularly. They do not accept anything at face value and use visits to school, as well as their meetings, to question the information you share with them. They carefully check the progress pupils make and challenge other data information, including that relating to attendance. They acknowledge that, while rates of attendance are just below national averages, there is more work to do with families of children who are persistently absent from school. They share your ambition for the school and want the best for every pupil.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, staff and governors demonstrate a strong commitment to keeping pupils safe. Regular and timely training, together with ongoing updates, ensure that all staff are highly skilled and alert to indications of harm. Staff take their duty of care very seriously. Appropriate checks are made to check the suitability of staff working with children and on visitors to the school. Governors regularly check the effectiveness of child protection policies and procedures.

Concerns are acted upon swiftly and appropriate support is provided for vulnerable children and their families. Designated safeguarding leads support each other well to ensure that effective action is taken. They are not afraid to escalate concerns if they feel a child is at risk of harm. Trusting relationships with families enable leaders to support sensitively, but also to have the difficult conversation when necessary. Family support provided by the school is welcomed and valued by parents. Leaders are also skilled in supporting families to access additional support

from external agencies.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school and demonstrate a very good understanding, especially of how to stay safe when using the internet. They linked the acronym 'APP' with 'ask parental permission' and say it reminds them to ask before using the internet. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose

Inspection findings

- Staff are committed to ensuring that children get the best start to their education. From an early age, staff know the children extremely well. They are acutely aware of their needs and abilities. Provision across the three reception classes is well organised and managed. Leaders ensure that the curriculum interests the children but also develops their knowledge and skills. During the inspection, children were observed cutting, colouring and creating stick puppets, paying great attention to detail. Over time, the majority of children develop the ability to focus and concentrate on their learning.
- Leaders work to ensure that no child is left behind with their learning. Adults are skilled in providing 'in the moment' support for those children who show signs of struggling. They work alongside children and show them what to do. Small group work is used effectively to develop speech and language skills. Children gain confidence to retell stories, such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. Sensitive support helps children to flourish and make progress from their low baseline.
- The development of a small classroom space is helping particularly vulnerable children to be successful in their learning. In a calm, quiet environment they learn sounds for reading, as well as how to listen carefully to instructions. Similarly, nurture provision in the log cabin supports pupils with significant emotional needs to develop the social skills they need to be successful. Adults are highly skilled and knowledgeable about how best to engage children in learning. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception has risen over the past three years. Although it is now similar to that found nationally, leaders acknowledge that there is still more to be done to enable children to achieve their very best.
- Until recently, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 was below the national average. As a result of strong, effective teaching in phonics across the school, outcomes have risen and in 2018 were similar to national averages. Leaders provide high-quality training and ongoing coaching, including instant feedback for staff, to ensure that provision is consistently good across the school. Regular assessments ensure that pupils are supported and challenged at the right level. They make strong progress and quickly develop the skills to read unknown words independently.
- Reading is further developed through regular guided reading sessions. Leaders ensure that pupils are targeted according to ability and supported accordingly. A close match of reading material with ability is evident across the school. Visits to the school library help develop a love of reading. For example, during the inspection, boys enthusiastically shared books together, talking excitedly about

the pictures and information. Home reading is encouraged and the majority of parents provide good support by hearing their children read regularly. Outcomes in reading have risen over time.

- The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils, particularly in writing, is a key priority for leaders. They have high expectations of every pupil and put no ceiling on what pupils can achieve. Leaders monitor the progress pupils make very closely. Opportunities to write in phonics sessions and in grammar, punctuation and spelling activities are helping pupils acquire the skills they need to write independently. High-quality texts to stimulate writing are used effectively. They provide a useful resource for pupils, exposing them to a broader vocabulary and different sentence structures.
- Many pupils come to school with limited life experiences. Leaders ensure that first-hand experiences are provided for pupils, so that they have something to write about. For example, when studying the topic of toys, a visit from 'Mr Tommy Tall Hat' provided pupils with the chance to look at and play with a wide range of vintage toys. Staff used this to inspire a range of writing, such as instructions, descriptions, letters and invitations. As a result, pupils' writing is richer and of a higher quality. Work books show that, by the end of Year 2, pupils develop the stamina to write at length using appropriate vocabulary. Attainment and progress in writing continues to improve. The gaps between different groups, including those who are disadvantaged, are beginning to close.
- There has been a culture change in the school regarding provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No longer are pupils reliant on an adult to support them, but instead are helped to develop greater independence in their learning. A comprehensive process is in place to ensure the early identification of any pupil with SEND. Learning passports clearly outline pupils' strengths and specific needs. High-quality training for staff enables them to understand pupils' individual needs. Different resources and scaffolded tasks help staff support pupils with their learning in the classroom. Quality-first teaching has been developed, to ensure that it meets the needs of the widest group of pupils possible.
- Specific, additional support is provided, such as phonics catch-up, speech and language support and self-esteem groups. Interventions are focused and time limited. Entry and exit assessment information is used to check pupils' progress and measure the success of the support provided. Specialist external support is sought, where appropriate, such as for pupils with hearing impairments or significant learning delays. Leaders carefully monitor the effectiveness of academic provision, as well as that for social and emotional needs. Leadership of SEND is strong, purposeful and ensures that every child is included. Consequently, pupils with SEND make good progress from their different starting points.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- expectations of what children can achieve in the early years are further developed
- the improvements in writing continue to be embedded, so that the gaps continue to narrow for vulnerable groups
- they continue to work with families to raise levels of attendance further.

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

Nicola Harwood
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and other leaders. I held a discussion with two governors. I also spoke to the school's external improvement partner on the telephone. I scrutinised a variety of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety. I checked documents relating to safeguarding and looked at published information on the school's website.

Accompanied by you and other leaders, I made short visits to classrooms and spoke to pupils informally. I met a group of pupils to hear them read and talk about the school more formally. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. I scrutinised their workbooks. I spoke to parents at the start of the school day. I considered 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and free-text comments. I also considered the 26 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.