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21 March 2019

Mrs Nicola Davies  
Executive Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Davies

### **Short inspection of Sutton Road Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 March 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 2015.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

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

You, your head of school, senior leadership team and governors work together to provide strong, cohesive leadership for the school. This united approach has created a nurturing and aspirational culture which reflects the school's aim for all pupils to reach their potential. Relationships are positive because teachers encourage pupils to be ambitious and challenge them to do their best. Pupils make strong progress during their time at Sutton Road Primary School and are well prepared for their secondary schools. For example, in 2018, standards at the end of Year 6 were above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.

Together with leaders and staff, you ensure that the school is an inspiring and welcoming place. The school is awash with displays celebrating pupils' work and motivating them to learn. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes to learning. They are confident and behave well. The large majority of parents and carers praise the school's ethos and the quality of education their children receive. An example of a comment typically stating the views of many parents was, 'The ethos of the school shines through in all aspects of school life including the after-school activities and the events to promote parental engagement. My children have made wonderful progress during their time at Sutton Road and I would highly recommend the school to other parents.'

You have high expectations of pupils and staff. You ensure that staff are supported

to improve their practice through effective coaching and mentoring from their colleagues, as well as through specifically focused staff training. You have established useful partnerships with local schools including your collaborated school, Holgate Primary and Nursery School, so that teachers and leaders can share and learn from good practice. These partnerships are improving the quality of teaching and learning and sharpening the skills of leaders at all levels.

Leaders' evaluation of the quality of education the school provides is accurate. Leaders, including governors, have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas in need of further development. Leaders have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. For example, leaders have reviewed their methods of evaluating the school's performance and revised the way they report their findings to governors. Reports and information for governors are now explicit and enable governors to effectively challenge leaders and hold staff to account. In addition, you have resolutely ensured that pupils now have ample opportunities to develop their understanding about future education and career opportunities. Effective links with the local and wider community have been established so that appropriately targeted visitors, trips, workshops and experiences inform pupils about the choices that are available to them. Pupils say they can help plan these experiences and thoroughly enjoy them. Admirably, leaders also explored the development of a mark of quality for the school for careers education and guidance. This had previously only been an option for secondary schools. Leaders successfully led this initiative through substantial improvements in their curriculum and in July 2017, alongside their collaborated school, became the first primary schools in the country to be awarded the Career Mark Primary Award.

Governors are knowledgeable and play an important role in ensuring that actions to improve the school are sustained. Frequent visits to school help governors to check on the impact of leaders' actions. Leaders at all levels are regularly invited to attend governing body meetings to report on the impact of their work to improve the school. This enables governors to hold leaders to account and ensures that improvements are effectively implemented and sustained. Governors have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities including for safeguarding and the monitoring of the use of additional funding, such as the pupil premium.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The arrangements for safeguarding are fit for purpose. Your safeguarding procedures and policies are appropriate and staff training is effective. You ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff know how to deal with safeguarding concerns and are alert to the potential risks to pupils. Members of your safeguarding team, including the leader responsible for monitoring pupils' attendance, work well together and effectively liaise with a variety of external agencies. They take swift action to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and are safe. During my discussions with leaders, it was clear that the school is very effectively highlighting the importance of good attendance through a variety of positive incentives, such as non-uniform tokens, opportunities to visit places of

interest, and the prospect of early entry for lunch on 'fish Friday'!

Pupils are safe, cooperate well and are respectful towards adults who work in the school. They say that incidents of bullying or poor behaviour do sometimes occur, but staff deal with them promptly and fairly. Pupils say they are happy to talk to adults about any worries or concerns they may have. The school offers a range of strategies for pupils to help them manage their feelings, develop their self-esteem and support their good mental health.

## **Inspection findings**

- Since the previous inspection, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has been below the national average. In 2018, the gap between the attainment of Reception Year children at Sutton Road and other children nationally increased. During our discussions, you explained that there have been significant staff changes across both the Nursery and Reception classes. This academic year you have recruited a new teacher for the Nursery Year and staffing across the early years is now stable.
- Children enter the school with knowledge and skills below those seen typically. Over recent years, there has been an increase in the proportion of children entering the school with language and communication and early reading skills which are well below those seen typically. Leaders have reviewed the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the early years to better meet the needs of children. The early years leader showed me how she has improved the way teachers assess children's achievements so that gaps in children's learning are more precisely identified. She checks that teachers use their assessments to effectively plan to meet children's needs and to ensure children make strong progress. The leader explained how she has also carried out a review of the provision across the early years classes to raise expectations. New strategies for teaching and learning have been introduced to better meet the changing, and increasingly complex, needs of children who are entering the school.
- During my visits to lessons in the early years classes with you, I could see how these improved strategies are having a positive impact on children's learning. It was clear that the development of children's language and communication skills is of high priority. Provision is carefully planned to stimulate children's interests and develop their knowledge, understanding and independence. Adults work effectively with children in small groups to model good language skills and target different areas of learning. For example, after reading of the story of 'The Three Bears', children were encouraged by a teacher to use adjectives to describe and create a 'wanted' poster. Using an image of Goldilocks, the teacher skilfully asked the children probing questions to extend their vocabulary and clarify their understanding.
- You identified that further improving the quality of provision for children in the Nursery class was a current priority. During my visit to the nursery with you, I could see that staff have high expectations for what children can achieve and are in the early stages of improving provision to better meet children's needs and challenge them in different areas of learning. However, some areas of the

classroom need renovating and some resources within the provision require updating. Through my discussions and observations of teaching, it is clear that leaders and staff across the early years are determined to ensure that the Nursery class offers children the same good-quality provision that is now provided in the Reception classes. You explained that some renovation work to the classroom will take place shortly and plans are in place to further improve the quality of provision.

- Observations of children's learning, including their use of phonics to read and spell, scrutiny of children's work and information shared by leaders, indicate that current children in the early years are making good progress and increased proportions are on track to gain a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year. However, the new approaches to teaching and learning are in the early stages and are not yet fully embedded across early years classrooms to be able to demonstrate consistently strong progress for all children.
- In recent years, the proportion of pupils who receive additional support for a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has been higher than that seen nationally. The special educational needs coordinator and the leader for inclusion work closely with staff to ensure pupils' needs are identified and met well. Leaders ensure that bespoke 'pupil progress plans' and 'pen portraits' are discussed frequently with staff, parents and pupils to ensure that pupils are well supported and make good progress. Collaboration with a range of professionals from external agencies and from local schools is helping to provide training and support for staff. You and other leaders told me that you are proud of the way staff adapt learning to meet pupils' needs and the large majority of parents agree. The inclusive ethos of the school was evident during my visits to lessons with you and from my scrutiny of pupils' work and individual plans.
- My discussions with leaders, including governors, highlighted the school's extensive work over the last year to improve pupils' writing across the school. You explained that these improvements have followed successful developments in the teaching of mathematics and reading. It was clear from my scrutiny of pupils' books that there have been significant improvements in the way writing is taught. You are aware that there is still further work to be done to ensure these improvements are fully established across all classes. Your school improvement plans sharply reflect your determination to ensure sustained improvements have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes in writing.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recently established strategies to improve teaching and learning in the early years are fully embedded across the Nursery and Reception classes to increase the proportion of children who attain a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year
- learning environments and provision across the early years consistently promote high expectations for all children.

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

Stephanie Innes-Taylor  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I met with you and the head of school. I also met with leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, the leader for attendance and several members of your senior leadership team including the leader for the early years. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day and I met with a group of pupils. I also spoke with pupils and staff during their lunchtime and during lessons. I met with three members of the governing body and had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.

You and I visited classrooms together. I looked at a range of pupils' work. We discussed the school's plans for improvement. I considered the 45 responses of parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View and the responses from parents to the school's own survey conducted during a recent parents' evening. There were no responses to the staff and pupil surveys. I scrutinised evidence from a range of documents, including leaders' policies, procedures and records for safeguarding and behaviour, an analysis of attendance and minutes from meetings of the governing body. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.