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Mrs Rebecca Dewing
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dewing

Short inspection of Garrick Green Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 15 May 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in March 2016.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection of your predecessor school. The school has become an academy and an active member of the Wensum Trust. You have forged effective partnerships that benefit the school and support your continuing journey of school improvement. You and your staff have ensured that the school has maintained a welcoming and nurturing environment by recognising each child as an individual. There is a strong sense of community, where parents and staff are valued, and learning is underpinned through the school motto, 'Learn to be happy. Be happy to learn.'

You and your staff know the school well. There is a strong team ethic where all the staff work collaboratively to achieve the school's ambitions. Leaders consult with the staff to check that they are well supported and have the skills to be successful in their roles. All staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey said that they enjoy working at the school and are proud to be a member of staff.

Pupils are clearly excited about the things they learn. Those that spoke to me said that they loved all their subjects, but especially writing where they could write about their favourite things. We visited classes together and saw pupils working cooperatively, discussing and sharing their ideas. Pupils focused well on their activities because teachers plan interesting activities. In all the classes we visited, pupils were attentive and worked purposefully. As one pupil correctly identified to me, 'I would not change anything because it is all nice and calm.'

All the parents who responded on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and those I met on the playground are highly positive about the teaching and pastoral support their children receive. All would recommend the school to another parent and appreciate the dedication of the team of staff. One parent captured the views of many by stating, 'Every staff member is always happy to " go the extra mile". I would highly recommend Garrick Green School.'

The local governing board is supportive and highly committed to the school. Some governors are new and are developing their skills through attending regular training events. This is helping to increase the challenge they provide to school leaders. Since the previous inspection of the predecessor school, leaders' written improvement plans provide more information for governors and are sharply focused on what needs to be done. However, the plans do not give clear timescales. This means that the challenge governors provide is not as sharp as it could be.

At the previous inspection of the predecessor school, leaders were also asked to improve the organisation of pupils' work so that progress could be easily identified from their starting points. Your decision to make more use of books to record pupils' learning has helped to demonstrate pupils' progress. Pupils' books show that there are clear expectations for the presentation of work and a range of activities that are well planned to support pupils' progress. This is especially evident in geography and science.

You are rightly proud of the improvements that have been made in the early years provision. The teaching is strong. Effective use is made of assessments so that planned activities build on children's experiences and interests. The provision outdoors is well developed and contributes effectively to promoting children's curiosity. For example, two children investigated the flow of water through some guttering and made careful adjustments to the position of the bucket in response to the speed it left the pipe.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors place a high importance upon keeping pupils safe. All staff have received appropriate training and anyone who is new to the school receives immediate information and induction into the school's policies and procedures. Leaders ensure that staff remain vigilant and knowledgeable through weekly discussion and updates. Staff understand how to recognise if pupils are at risk and record their concerns.

Records are well maintained, and the use of electronic recording ensures that there is a chronology of actions taken by school leaders and different agencies. Leaders are tenacious in pursuing the support that has been agreed to keep pupils safe. All the relevant safeguarding checks and records are in place.

Pupils, parents and staff strongly agree that the school is a safe place. Pupils understand about those who care for them and the type of concerns they would

share with adults if they were worried. Pupils know about the dangers when they are online and different ways to keep themselves safe when they are out in the community.

Inspection findings

- Firstly, I wanted to explore how leaders were ensuring that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is being used effectively. This is because, while groups are small, the published information for 2018 shows that these pupils did not attain as well as other pupils by the end of key stage 1. Also, disadvantaged pupils do not attend school as regularly as other pupils.
- Leaders have developed a clear rationale for the use of pupil premium funding. Your strategy identifies how both the academic and social development of pupils are considered, and actions are identified to remove the barriers to learning. There are regular meetings with teachers to discuss how well pupils are doing and that the plans devised for pupils' learning are continuing to support pupils' progress. You have acted quickly to address any concerns with pupils' attendance. This is now improving. Evidence seen in pupils' work and the school's own information show that disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress.
- Your leaders ensure that pupils with SEND receive well-planned support to meet their needs. Leaders are knowledgeable and work closely with teachers to adjust learning plans for pupils with SEND. Teaching assistants have been well trained to deliver specific interventions. Leaders regularly check the impact of the support provided and meet with parents to keep them informed about their child's progress. Pupils with SEND make good progress towards their personalised targets.
- Next, I wanted to check how well pupils make progress from their starting points, especially girls in mathematics and the most able boys in writing. This is because these groups did not attain as highly when compared to similar groups at the end of key stage 1 in 2018.
- Leaders have taken the decision to group pupils in mathematics. This means that teaching is tailored to meet the needs of the pupils. This is helping to improve girls' confidence in mathematics. We visited classes where mathematics was being taught and looked at pupils' books. Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop their mathematical skills across a range of concepts. We saw pupils making good use of their calculation skills to solve multi-step problems. Pupils were able to recall number facts quickly that helped them to be successful with their calculations.
- Leaders have introduced new approaches to develop pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics. However, these strategies are not used across all year groups. Work in books shows that not all pupils are provided with opportunities to secure their understanding of mathematics through reasoning activities. Where teacher subject knowledge is weaker, misconceptions are not addressed. This means that pupils do not develop a secure understanding of the concept they are learning

and limits the progress they are making.

- Your teachers have considered different topics that appeal to boys' interests. The purpose of this is to encourage boys to write and provide purpose for their writing. For example, pupils' workbooks reflect the choice of topics such as 'castles' and 'off with their heads'. The books for the most able boys show an increase in the frequency of writing. This is helping them to develop greater confidence with their choice of vocabulary and phrasing. For example, one pupil describing a dragon wrote, 'when angry eyes turn to fire'. However, pupils are only just starting to write in different subjects. Leaders have rightly identified that this will help pupils, especially the boys, to embed and apply their writing skills.
- Finally, I wanted to find out whether pupils were developing a range of skills across the curriculum. All teachers take responsibility for developing and leading the curriculum. They work well as a cohesive team and share leaders' high expectations for the achievement of pupils across the foundation subjects. They work successfully to review the curriculum so that it stimulates pupils' interests, develops their curiosity and brings learning alive. At the start of each topic teachers conduct a 'knowledge harvest' to identify what pupils already know and what they would like to find out. Pupils deepen their learning through a variety of activities and experiences enriched through trips, visitors to the school and themed subject weeks. This is ensuring that pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers build on the current strategies for developing the use of reasoning in mathematics and have the mathematical subject knowledge to address pupils' misconceptions
- pupils apply their writing skills across the curriculum
- the school's plan for improvement identifies when actions are carried out so that governors' challenge is effective when they hold leaders to account.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing board, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Wensum Trust, the regional schools' commissioner and the director of children's services for Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Steve Mellors
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and other leaders in the school. I spoke with a group of governors from the local governing board, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. I also met with the chief executive officer of the trust and his successor. I spoke with staff and considered their views on the online survey. I observed learning jointly with you and your deputy headteacher. I met with groups of pupils. I scrutinised a selection of the pupils' workbooks with senior leaders. I examined a range of the school's documentation, including its self-evaluation document, improvement plan and documents related to safeguarding. I considered the views of parents by speaking with them after school. I also analysed the 39 responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.