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Mr James Singleterry
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Singleterry

Short inspection of Stukeley Meadows Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 June 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 January 2016.

This school continues to be good.

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

Stukeley Meadows Primary School is a warm and welcoming school, in which pupils gain the security they need to become confident individuals. With your leaders, you make sure that pupils receive personalised help and support. Pupils say that if they are having a bad day, adults talk to them to help them feel better. The vast majority of parents speak highly of the school. One told me that her children are privileged to attend.

Your main focus is to make sure that pupils are safe and that they learn. Pupils told me that the 'Stukeley 6' acronym for safety (staff, adults, family, email, talk box, friend) helps them every day. As a result, most parents feel that their children are making very good progress, both academically and socially.

Pupils told me they enjoy coming to school. They said some of the best things about the school are going on school trips because they help you learn. They also like attending clubs, for example 'microbit' club to learn about computer programming. They said that going to clubs helps them get on with people. During this inspection, pupils were well behaved, polite and enthusiastic about speaking to me.

Overall, parents are very positive about the school. Most feel that the quality of

education provided by Stukeley Meadows is very good and that their children are treated fairly and equitably. Parents described the school to me as being 'an excellent school providing a supportive and positive environment'. Where parents made less favourable comments, I found no evidence to support them.

Governors know the school very well. They strike a happy balance of mutual challenge and support. They work effectively with you and your leaders to determine the effectiveness of the school and priorities for further improvement. They check on the school's progress towards priorities on a regular basis. They have challenged you effectively about the dip in progress in writing for the most able pupils.

Leaders have evaluated the effectiveness of the school accurately. This means that you all act with urgency where there is underperformance. The school works effectively with the local authority and the adviser confirmed that you have addressed weaknesses effectively. The priorities which leaders have drawn up for the school development plan are appropriate. They keep the effectiveness of the school under constant review and this leads to ongoing improvement. Leaders and governors have successfully addressed the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. The school website makes clear what you want for pupils during their time at the school, 'getting our best even better', every single day. The values of the school, to care, create, compete and collaborate, run through every aspect of its work. Staff play an important role in peer reviews with local schools and you make sure that your staff learn from the experience, as well as sharing their expertise.

Leaders have decided to adapt the way in which English is taught. Teachers use the agreed programme until the end of Year 4. After that, teachers prepare pupils for Year 6 by introducing a rather more challenging programme of work. Leaders have checked that teachers are teaching the subject effectively in Years 5 and 6. This is paying dividends in the progress that pupils are making, especially in writing. The work staff are undertaking with the English hub in London is an exciting initiative.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Safeguarding sits at the heart of the school's work. As a result, pupils, parents and staff are rightly confident that the school is a safe place. Leaders, including governors, have created a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff know what to look out for when pupils are missing from school or are subject to possible radicalisation. They are confident to make referrals where they are concerned about child protection. The online recording system is completed thoroughly and actions are monitored and followed up.

Pupils told me that teachers help them to know how to deal with concerns, such as when other pupils try to persuade them to believe in something they know to be wrong. They said that bullying and racism are very rare but that adults deal with

incidents swiftly when they occur. They know how to keep themselves safe online. Governors make sure pupils are safe through their regular checks, through scrutiny of the various policies and through discussions with pupils.

Inspection findings

- We agreed that I would look in detail at the progress most-able pupils in key stage 2 make in writing across the curriculum. This was because in 2017 and 2018 the progress that these pupils made in writing was below that seen nationally. In addition, the previous inspection report asked leaders to improve outcomes for most-able pupils.
- I saw evidence of strong progress, especially in Years 5 and 6. For example, pupils write at greater length, using much more sophisticated grammar techniques. I also saw improvements in the quality of editing and in the accuracy with which they write. However, it was clear from pupils' books that teachers in Years 5 and 6 have to compensate for the slower progress pupils made prior to this, in lower key stage 2.
- In many cases, writing across the curriculum is not yet well developed. For example, teachers limit the opportunities pupils have to write in subjects other than English because of the kind of activities they plan for them. Pupils do not use the skills they learn in English, such as editing, well enough in other subjects.
- The next area I looked at in detail was how well disadvantaged pupils are doing in reading. This was because in 2017 and 2018 these pupils did not attain as well as other pupils nationally at the end of key stage 2.
- The library is well stocked with high-quality texts and is well organised. There is a good balance of books to support the school's reading scheme and new books to support the newly introduced Stukeley reading spine. Pupils show great enthusiasm for and enjoyment of reading. They read known words with accuracy and they self-correct known words where needed. They recap what they have already read and predict reasonably well. They do not read with intonation or expression. This is because teachers do not routinely read to them for pleasure. In key stage 2, pupils have limited phonics strategies to help them to read new or unfamiliar words.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to recap prior learning through activities such as 'word of the day'. However, these activities do not always challenge the most able pupils well enough, especially in lower key stage 2.
- We decided to look at how effectively teachers in Year 3 build on pupils' reading skills from key stage 1. This was because, although key stage 1 reading outcomes match those seen nationally, by the time pupils reach the end of key stage 2 they do not do as well as they should.
- In Year 2, teachers have chosen to create displays which are rich and vibrant. They include high-quality texts linked to a topic. This keeps reading high profile in these classrooms. The displays in some other classrooms are not of the same quality. In Year 2, teachers' expectations of what pupils should read are high. For example, pupils read words and phrases such as 'beautiful but dangerous

creatures', 'recently' and 'sightings'. In Year 3, the expectations for reading were lower.

- Finally, we decided to look at attendance. This is because attendance was slightly lower than the national average. In addition, we recognised the important link between attendance and safeguarding.
- Leaders' strategies to improve attendance are working well because attendance figures are rising and now match the national figure. The number of exclusions has dropped significantly because leaders have been relentless in making sure pupils are well supported to manage their own behaviour.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide greater opportunities for pupils to produce good-quality writing in subjects other than English.
- teachers in key stage 2 consistently expect the very best of most-able writers
- the plans to reintroduce the direct teaching of reading in key stage 2 are implemented effectively, especially in Years 3 and 4.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Jones
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and the senior leadership team. I met with a group of seven governors. I spoke with the local authority link adviser. I spoke with 20 parents and took account of 83 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I considered an email sent to me by a parent. I evaluated a range of documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, the school development plan and documents relating to safeguarding, including the single central record and child protection records. Together with your leaders, I made short visits to classrooms in Years 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 to observe teaching and to speak with pupils about their learning. I also made very brief visits to the early years and Year 1 classrooms. Pupils from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 read to me and spoke to me about their book choices. I spoke with a group of 12 pupils about their welfare. I reviewed samples of pupils' English, mathematics and 'topic' books.

