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Miss Claire Russell
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Dear Miss Russell

Short inspection of Notley Green Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 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 first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in June 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

You and the rest of the leadership team have created a school where pupils and staff are ambitious, confident and determined to improve beyond current levels of success. Staff and pupils share the same drive to improve and their strong relationships ensure that improvement plans move forward positively. Pupils strive to achieve their best in and out of lessons and encourage the pupils around them to do the same. Staff are committed to researching and implementing the most effective teaching practices. Staff reflect on which approaches work well for their pupils and make changes to their teaching that lead to better learning. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has continued to improve.

Since the previous inspection, leaders' actions have led to many improvements in the quality of education at the school. Leaders carefully check the progress of all pupils and act swiftly to provide effective support when pupils are at risk of achieving below what they should. In the three years since the previous inspection, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard has risen and is above national averages. The strength of leadership at the school has also been recognised outside the school. Leaders from the school serve as advisers to support improvement at other local schools within the trust and the local area. Along with improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, leaders have developed a vibrant physical environment. Most recently, pupils

appreciate and benefit from the new library and new accommodation for children in Reception.

At the previous inspection, leaders were asked to set tasks that challenge all pupils, including the most able, to extend their knowledge and skills and deepen their understanding. The level of challenge teachers provide for pupils is increasing. Teachers plan learning sequences that help pupils take next steps in their learning. In mathematics, for example, I saw skilfully designed learning sequences enable pupils to develop their learning from adding fractions to deeper reasoning and application. As a result of the changes in teaching, learning and assessment, pupils are now making the progress and attainment they should.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements and are applied consistently. Pupils' safety is of paramount importance to staff, governors and trustees. Staff regularly assess risks around each pupil at school and provide timely support when concerns arise. They record their assessments and actions meticulously and work closely with outside agencies to provide effective support to pupils and their families when necessary.

The trust carefully monitors safeguarding arrangements as do governors. All members of the governing body take responsibility, alongside the safeguarding governor, to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. Leaders use the findings of trust representatives and governors to update their procedures so that they are fit for purpose.

Leaders carry out all the required checks to ensure that adults working with pupils are suitable. The record of these checks is carefully maintained and regularly checked by governors and trust representatives.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I looked at the actions leaders are taking to ensure that pupils behave well at school. Pupils live up to the school's firmly embedded values. Leaders have created a caring environment at the school where pupils feel part of a family. On the playground, for example, pupils know to look for others who are alone and invite them to play. Pupils show interest in and are keen to build relationships with newcomers and visitors to the school. New pupils to the school told me that they were quickly integrated within the school and felt part of 'the Notley family' now.
- Pupils conduct themselves considerately while moving around school and during playtime. Appropriate supervision ensures that pupils are safe at playtime. Supervisors also help pupils resolve the infrequent disagreements that arise during play. As a result, pupils are able to discuss their own points of view, consider the views of others and solve their own relationship difficulties very well without needing adults. Pupils said to me that at playtime they play well together and 'Everyone is kind.' Most pupils reported on the online pupil survey that behaviour around school is good.
- In lessons, pupils take responsibility for their learning and focus carefully on the tasks set by staff. When working in groups, pupils do so without distraction and provide

effective support for each other in their learning. When activities are hard or when pupils make mistakes, they show resilience and encourage each other to 'have another go' rather than give up.

- Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is and report that bullying is very rare. The majority of pupils who completed the online survey agreed that while bullying happens at the school, teachers respond well to resolve the issue. Pupils also reported to me that cultural diversity is valued at the school. Racist incidents are very rare and dealt with appropriately and, as a result, are not repeated. Most pupils on the online pupil survey also agreed that the school encourages pupils to respect people from other backgrounds and to treat everyone equally.
- I also considered the actions leaders are taking to improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils enjoy school and take part fully in the curriculum. Many pupils with SEND take part in clubs and serve in positions of responsibility, such as being members of the student council.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well as a team to support pupils with SEND. Teaching assistants support teachers well by capably leading one-to-one and small group sessions. This work helps pupils with SEND gain confidence and develop independence. Teaching assistants share the same professional curiosity as teachers at the school. They seek out and benefit from effective training that improves their work.
- Leaders' actions are particularly effective for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Leaders quickly and accurately identify these pupils' needs and create bespoke support that ensures that any barriers to learning are removed. As a result of leaders' support, these pupils work hard in lessons and value learning. These pupils also develop healthy relationships with staff and their classmates. This contributes towards their emotional well-being as well as the quality of their learning in lessons.
- Pupils with SEND are not always making the progress they should. This is because some teachers do not have high enough expectations of them and plan learning sequences that do not always effectively meet their needs.
- Finally, I looked at the actions leaders are taking to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics. After accurately identifying the need to improve provision for mathematics, leaders researched the most effective practices available and put carefully considered plans in place to train staff.
- The approach to mathematics chosen by leaders is working in the classes where the approach is embedded well. In those classes where the approach is embedded, pupils can discuss their mathematical thinking articulately. The ease with which one pupil explained to me what it means to reason mathematically is typical of the confidence pupils have when discussing their learning. As a result of the changes, these pupils are better able to apply their learning in mathematics to solve complex problems. The new approach has also increased the level of challenge for pupils. Teachers provide harder work and the pupils respond positively. Pupils showed me that they value challenging activities that require them to think hard about mathematics.
- While some teachers are very skilful at using the new strategies, others are less so. As a result, leaders' intended improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet as widespread as leaders intend.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all staff have the highest expectations for pupils with SEND and provide support that ensures that these pupils make the progress they are capable of
- the chosen approaches to teaching mathematics are firmly embedded in all classes so that pupils consistently achieve well.

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

Yours sincerely

Al Mistrano

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with you, other members of the leadership team, members of the governing body, staff, pupils and parents. We observed learning and teaching in all year groups. With you and other members of your leadership team, I scrutinised pupils' work in English and mathematics. I observed the behaviour of pupils at playtime and while moving around the school.

I looked at a range of documents including the records of checks that leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children, a sample of documentation regarding the provision for pupils with SEND, leaders' self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.

I considered the 103 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents, the 30 responses to the online staff questionnaire and the 47 responses to the online pupil survey.