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Miss Rachel Jarvis
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Jarvis

Short inspection of Hawthorne Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 24 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 April 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

Since your appointment in 2017, you have been relentless in your pursuit of improving standards in the school. Detailed reports clearly show the impact of your work over the year. These improvements have been achieved during a year in which you have had to manage significant changes in staff.

Accurate and honest self-evaluation ensures that staff and governors are clear about how well the school is performing and the areas that need to improve. The detailed school improvement plan accurately identifies actions and success criteria which help governors to hold you to account. The plan also supports staff well in understanding your expectations.

Pupils are polite and courteous. They spoke to me with maturity and confidence. They enjoy opportunities to help the school improve further, for example by acting as eco-warriors, school ambassadors, school councillors or playground buddies. During the weekly school council assemblies, councillors discuss important issues with the whole school. As a consequence of these meetings, pupils are really looking forward to having their healthy tuck shed on the playground, and are currently discussing ways to raise money to provide new playground equipment.

The school values of 'ready, respectful and safe' are well understood by the pupils. Alongside these values, the newly implemented behaviour policy has ensured that pupils are very clear about the importance of behaving well and respecting others. During the inspection, pupils were keen to learn and wanted to achieve their learning goals.

Pupils enjoy a diverse and engaging curriculum. Across the school, science days have inspired pupils to develop good investigative skills as they enjoyed competing to make the best aircraft. Themes focusing on chocolate and evolution help to motivate and engage learners, while 'wow' days and visits help to spark pupils' enthusiasm for topics. Learning about equality and diversity has helped to ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. As one pupil commented, 'People deserve to be able to do the same things and have the same rights no matter how different they are.'

The governing body has been strengthened through effective self-evaluation, which has led to the appointment of governors with specific skills. Furthermore, individual governors now take a lead in checking on how much progress has been made in a particular aspect of the school improvement plan. Their findings are discussed in the standards committee meetings, during which leaders are challenged and held accountable for improvements.

In 2018, the attainment and progress of pupils at the end of key stage 2 were well below national averages. However, the inspection found compelling evidence that current pupils are making good progress. Those few pupils who have fallen behind are known to teachers and they receive additional support.

The previous inspection asked leaders to improve pupils' handwriting and spelling skills, and ensure that there is greater challenge for the most able pupils. You have introduced a new cursive handwriting scheme and have ensured that teachers are now identifying spelling errors in pupils' work and ensuring that pupils practise corrected spellings. However, inspection evidence suggests the most able pupils are not consistently challenged in their learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The newly implemented reporting system is well understood by staff. It ensures that concerns are responded to swiftly and actions taken are shared with those adults who need to know.

Teachers' and teaching assistants' knowledge and skills have been kept up to date through regular training, which has included preventing radicalisation and female genital mutilation. Staff identified a range of behaviours that required reporting and were equally clear about the need to talk immediately to a safeguarding lead when required.

A family support worker works regularly with potentially vulnerable pupils, ensuring their well-being and providing nurture and guidance in specific areas. Parents and carers spoke very highly of this support and greatly appreciate the work of the school in this area.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, one of the areas I looked at was the teaching and learning of reading in key stage 2. Lesson visits showed that teachers are implementing the school's new approach to teaching reading effectively. Pupils have opportunities to immerse themselves in texts, learn new vocabulary and develop new skills and understanding. This is achieved within a well-understood teaching framework which supports pupils' learning effectively. Pupils enjoy the new approach; as one pupil commented, 'It gives us more vocabulary and helps us in our learning.' However, at this early stage of implementation, the most able pupils in the class are not always challenged enough. Teachers currently do not consistently expect more from these pupils.
- I also focused on the quality of learning and teaching in writing, in key stage 1. Pupils enjoy a broad range of writing opportunities, which helps to motivate them to write. They write extended pieces of work, which help them to persevere with writing tasks and apply the skills they have learned. However, teachers are not consistently clear about what it is they want pupils to learn. A lack of opportunity to reflect upon good examples and share ideas through discussion means that some pupils are not fully achieving their learning goals.
- Detailed assessment information enables you to closely monitor and evaluate the quality of learning in each class. In addition, regular checks on the quality of teaching and of pupils' work in their books help you to understand the impact of school-improvement work. This information is used well to identify the few pupils who have not made the progress of which they are capable. Teachers use this information to target additional support for these pupils, to help them catch up. However, this support does not always match the pupils' learning needs closely enough. Also, the impact of this support is not measured and, as such, it is not always clear if pupils have acquired the necessary skills to help them catch up.
- You have worked tirelessly over the last year to ensure that pupils achieve the very best they can. The new staffing structure, together with significant changes to the governing body, places the school in a very good position to continue the improvements evident from the inspection.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils are fully challenged in their learning through teachers expecting even more of them
- the extra support provided for pupils is better targeted and measured for its impact

- the quality of learning and teaching in writing continues to improve in key stage 1.

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

Andrew Lakatos
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, members of the staff, governors, parents, pupils and teaching assistants. I sampled several lessons with you and together we looked at the work in pupils' books from a range of abilities across the school. I met with members of the school council to talk about their learning and experiences of school life. I took account of 41 responses from parents who completed the online survey, Parent View, and the eight parents with whom I spoke at the beginning of the school day, and a letter. I looked at a range of documents, including the school development plan, the school's self-evaluation, records of monitoring, minutes from the strategic committee governing body meetings and assessment information.