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22 November 2016

Mr Simon Eardley
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Dear Mr Eardley

Short inspection of Orton Wistow Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 October 2016, 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 December 2011.

This school continues to be good.

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. In a period when the school has grown in size significantly, you have been successful in maintaining your distinctive inclusive approach through the continued development of the school's PRIDE ethos (the school's code of 'polite, respect, independent, do your best, everybody matters'). Adults and pupils model polite respect and strive to do their best. Consequently, Orton Wistow Primary School is a place where pupils are exceptionally well cared for and develop a love of learning. The high quality of your engagement with parents noted at the previous inspection remains a very strong feature of the school's work. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of education and care you and your staff provide. Inspection evidence supports parents' views that, 'this is a vibrant and friendly school' and 'this is a well-managed school that works hard for its children'.

You are rightly proud of the inspiring learning environment that you have created for pupils. Inside and outside areas are thoughtfully designed to support age-appropriate learning, play and reflection. For example, the skilful design of the Years 5 and 6 area, which reflects that of secondary school, is helping to prepare these pupils well for the next stage of their education.

The bright displays are not only a reflection of high-quality pupil work, but also provide pupils with a stimulating environment in which to learn. Pupils recognise and appreciate this. One pupil told me that the school is 'a lovely environment to learn in'. Many of his peers echoed this sentiment throughout the day.

The previous inspection report highlighted the strength of your leadership and the fact that you have the support of your school community. This continues to be the case. Your clear, reflective leadership, along with that of your deputy headteacher, has ensured that the school continues to improve. You make well-thought-out amendments to the curriculum, teaching teams and the school environment when your detailed monitoring indicates that aspects of provision need developing. Inspection evidence demonstrates that these actions are effective in bringing about improvement. For example, last year you focused on further improving the quality of reading. As a result, reading is an important part of school life. Pupils read confidently and with cheerful enthusiasm, and standards of reading are high and improving.

Children are provided with an excellent start to their education. This is because adults in the early years skilfully provide high-quality learning opportunities and a bright, stimulating learning environment. Owing to the effective leadership of key stage 1, this strong start is successfully built upon further in Years 1 and 2.

You have recognised where provision needs to improve. When achievement in writing declined at key stage 2, you took swift and effective action to improve the quality of writing across the school. For example, you provided a variety of carefully chosen resources to help younger pupils improve their pencil grip. As a result of this approach and the well-planned learning activities, pupils in key stage 1 successfully develop a good understanding of writing skills and put them to good use. Current pupils, especially boys, have improved the quality and presentation of their written work. In 2016, key stage 2 pupils' outcomes in writing were above the national average. Evidence in pupils' books and in your accurate assessment information confirms that the quality of writing in the older years is good and improving. This is, again, particularly true of current boys' writing.

You have also taken effective action to improve the quality of mathematics teaching at key stage 1. In this subject, standards being achieved by key stage 1 pupils are above the national average. This level of progress is not as evident at key stage 2, where in 2016, outcomes were in line with national expectations. Your careful reflection, skilful deployment of resources and effective training of teachers are already impacting upon the progress that pupils make in mathematics. Pupils are developing a deeper understanding of mathematics and applying their skills and techniques well. The progress that many current pupils make in mathematics is good and sometimes better.

In 2016, no pupil achieved a higher score in reading, writing and mathematics combined. You are already responding to these results. Your detailed improvement planning makes clear the need to ensure that there is a sufficient level of challenge in all lessons and areas of the curriculum. Adults understand clearly that your

expectation is that the achievement of the most able pupils is 'everyone's responsibility'. Evidence seen in visits to lessons and in pupils' work demonstrates that, while teachers carefully plan learning that takes into account the needs of the most able pupils, the implementation of this planning varies. For example, some teachers' timing of activities results in the most able accessing these higher level learning opportunities too late in the lesson.

You have developed a varied curriculum to ensure that pupils have access to rich experiences supported by a range of visits and speakers. Evidence seen in pupils' books demonstrates that, while they make good progress across a range of subjects, it is not as consistently strong as it now is in English and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils explained that they feel safe at school and that the secure design of the school site makes a significant contribution to their sense of safety. They also told me that adults work hard to make sure that pupils are aware of the strategies that will help them to stay safe. For example, due to the work of the school's 'e-safety cadets', pupils know how to stay safe when using the internet. Pupils commented that adults in the school help them to understand how to keep safe in variety of settings, such as when they are near roads or railways.

Pupils have a clear understanding of different types of bullying and explained confidently that bullying rarely occurs at their school. All parents who responded to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View, indicated that their children are safe and happy at school. School records support this view. It is a distinctive feature of this school that pupils mix exceptionally well together. Positive relationships are the norm and this harmonious atmosphere contributes to an environment in which pupils feel secure in their learning and play.

Adults in school are appropriately trained and alert to their safeguarding responsibilities, including those relating to the 'Prevent' duty. Adults know what to do if they have a concern about the well-being of a child and can explain why it is important to take action. Leaders have ensured that safeguarding records, including the single central record of checks on staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with children, are accurately maintained.

Inspection findings

- The widely respected and inspirational headteacher and his deputy headteacher lead the school well. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Their self-evaluation informs a detailed school improvement plan which outlines precise priorities for the current academic year. Leaders carefully track the progress made towards bringing about these improvements. This is ensuring that the quality of education offered at Orton Wistow Primary School continues to improve.

- The headteacher has worked effectively to improve the quality of middle leadership since the previous inspection. Middle leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastic in their work. The leaders responsible for the early years and those of English and mathematics have taken effective action to improve the curriculum, together with the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their areas. Leaders of other subjects can demonstrate their knowledge of the progress of pupils on a case-by-case basis. They are not yet making the most effective use of this information to accelerate the progress that different groups make across their subject areas.
- Governors share the headteacher's high aspirations for the school and its pupils. The governing body provides appropriate support to the headteacher and his senior team, for example in providing the funding required to purchase additional resources to improve the quality of mathematics teaching. Inspection evidence demonstrates that governors are also prepared to challenge senior leaders when they feel that provision could be improved. Governors acknowledge that while they have a detailed understanding of standards in core subjects, they are not as well informed of the progress that pupils make across some other subjects.
- Leaders have had a marked impact on improving outcomes in the early years and at key stage 1. This is due to a skilfully planned and well-executed programme of improvement. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development was higher than the national average in 2015 and rose further in 2016. Similarly, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics is considerably higher than the national average. Standards at the end of key stage 1 are above national figures, in particular in mathematics.
- Leaders work effectively to ensure that pupils progress at a similar rate at key stage 2 as they do at key stage 1. However, outcomes in 2016 indicate that there remains work to be done in this area in order for the school to achieve its aim to become outstanding. Leaders made 'the love of reading' a focus for the school in 2015. They also provided training to ensure that teachers are more confident and skilled when teaching writing. As a consequence, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment improved and many pupils made better progress than the national average in reading and writing in 2016. This was not the case in mathematics. Leaders have led swift improvements in response to these outcomes. Evidence in pupils' books demonstrates that this is already having a positive impact. Pupils welcome the 'new things' they are doing in mathematics and are already able to demonstrate higher levels of skill. As a result, the progress that many current pupils make at key stage 2 is good and in some cases better.
- Leaders have rightly made the achievement of the most able pupils a priority for the school. Where teachers provide the most able pupils with time to attempt the school's 'challenge' tasks, these pupils show what they are capable of achieving. However, not all teachers provide sufficient time for the most able pupils to make the most effective use of these opportunities.

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance has been higher than the national average over the past four years. This continues to be the case. For example, the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. Leaders monitor the attendance of all groups of pupils and individual pupils with care, and staff work supportively with parents to ensure that few pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance.
- School leaders have worked very effectively to ensure that parents have the opportunities to support and take part in their children's learning. Parents taking part in the well-attended '2canlearn' session (the school's name for its regular parent and child learning workshops) were full of praise for the work of school leaders and their efforts to involve parents in school life.

Next steps for the school

Leader and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders, including governors, track the progress of different groups of pupils in other subjects with the same care and precision as they do for English and mathematics, and then make sure that these leaders take appropriate action to ensure that pupils make the same rate of progress that many are making in reading, writing and mathematics
- all teachers provide the most able pupils with the opportunities to achieve the high standards of which they are capable
- all policies and statutory information are kept up to date on the school website.

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

Yours sincerely

John Lucas
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other members of the senior leadership team, five subject leaders, four governors and a group of 15 pupils. During two tours of the school, one with you and one with your deputy headteacher, I visited each classroom and observed pupils at work. I carried out a scrutiny of work in pupils' books. Documents, including those relating to safeguarding, school improvement planning, pupils' achievement and attendance, and governance, were examined. I also took account of the views of parents who responded to Parent View as well as those of parents who spoke with me at the start of the school day. I also examined the school's website and found it not to be compliant.

The key lines of enquiry followed on this inspection were:

- How effective is safeguarding?
- How effectively are leaders improving the quality of pupils' writing?
- How effectively is mathematics taught?
- What is being done to support the most able pupils?
- What is being done to support the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- How well do pupils progress across the range of subjects in the curriculum?