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Mrs Sarah Stillie
Headteacher
North Road Community Primary School
North Road
Yate
South Gloucestershire
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Dear Mrs Stillie

Short inspection of North Road Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 February 2017, 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There is a supportive family feel to the school which never compromises its effectiveness. Most parents are very happy with the school and, as one parent described, 'there is always a lovely buzz' of activity. Another parent summed up the views of others by explaining that 'I am very happy with this school and I think the teachers and governors are doing a good job. My children are clearly progressing very well... My children are happy and confident and enjoy attending the school.'

Since your appointment after the previous inspection, governors and teachers agree that you have made an impressive impact on the school and managed change very well. They agree that you lead by example and consistently model and uphold the school values of 'respect, pride, perseverance, responsibility, ambition and positivity'.

The previous inspection report suggested ways to improve teaching by making it clear to pupils what they were learning in lessons and ensuring that they understood the school's marking policy. When we visited classes together, it was evident that pupils know what they are learning and are clear about the way in which teachers mark their work.

The previous inspection report also asked the school to provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge across a range of

different subjects. This has been successfully achieved through the introduction of an exciting new curriculum approach. Pupils use their mathematical skills well when they explore interesting topics, such as 'Brunel's brilliant Bristol' and 'Should we go to India?'

At the previous inspection, leaders were asked to include milestones in their school development plan which could be used by governors to evaluate the impact of initiatives on improving pupils' progress. By changing the school development plan from a three-year to a one-year programme, leaders have ensured that it is more tailored to meet the needs of the pupils. You, your subject leaders and governors strongly influence its direction by consistently evaluating the progress that is being made towards achieving the targets you have set.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Both staff and governors have completed all relevant training. Recruiting and vetting procedures are thorough and systematically maintained. The safeguarding of all pupils is paramount to staff and is an integral part of school life. For example, there is always a dedicated timeslot during the weekly staff meetings to discuss any safeguarding issues and highlight the needs of those vulnerable pupils who require extra support. As a consequence, pupils report that they feel very safe in school and know that they can speak to any member of staff about a problem or concern. They are very clear about keeping safe when using the internet and know how to avoid falling victim to cyber bullying.

The vast majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, reported that their children are happy at school and feel well looked after. A very small proportion of parents expressed some concerns about the behaviour of a few pupils which they feel has a detrimental impact on their own children. We discussed the level of support you provide for those pupils who find it a challenge to manage their own behaviour. I was satisfied that appropriate systems are in place to keep everyone safe. In particular, I was impressed by the pupils' strong level of tolerance and understanding towards any classmates who find it difficult conforming to school routines.

Inspection findings

- You explained that the school had been disappointed with the 2016 national test results in mathematics for Year 6 pupils. My first line of enquiry was to explore how you had responded to this outcome. Test results were swiftly analysed and it was noted that pupils, just under half of whom had arrived in the past 12 months, had gaps in their mathematical knowledge. This included a lack of understanding when working with fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils also lacked the confidence to select the particular mathematical skill they needed to use to solve different problems. When we

visited mathematics lessons, we noted that pupils are now much more confident working with fractions, decimals and percentages. They eagerly tackle word problems and enthusiastically look for further challenges when they have completed their work. However, we saw that not all pupils record their mathematical calculations using one square per digit as per your agreed policy. This is leading to potential confusion and inaccuracy in their work.

- Teachers and pupils are now making much better use of practical resources and visual prompts in Years 1 to 6 to support the development of mathematical concepts. However, not enough use is made of the outdoor learning to help the Reception children explore mathematical concepts and extend their learning.
- You explained that the performance of the girls in the 2016 national mathematics test for Year 6 had been of particular concern to you. The girls had displayed a high level of anxiety during the test and this had impacted negatively on their performance. To make sure that this does not happen again, you and your teachers have established a 'girls only' mathematics club. In this relaxed and informal setting, girls are developing a confident and resilient approach to solving mathematical problems. This is having a strong impact on the progress they are making. The 'early bird' session for Year 6, which also includes challenge activities for the most able mathematicians, is also accelerating their progress.
- My next line of enquiry was to find out what you were doing to tackle the poor attendance of some groups of pupils, in particular boys and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You keep a close eye on those pupils who do not attend school regularly or are consistently late. The effective systems for notifying the school of any absences are understood by parents and the firm stance on not taking holidays in term-time is clear. A significant minority of pupils are a valued part of your local travelling community and are away for long periods of time. In addition to this, during the academic year 2015/16, there was a high proportion of personal family situations and poor health issues. These all impacted negatively on your attendance rates.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of the impact absence has on their progress and show a mature responsibility to attending school regularly. They explain that if they are away from school they will have 'lost learning time'. The pupils have developed a competitive edge to attendance, punctuality and no lateness. This is because of the much-coveted weekly 'PAL' class award which they are all eager to win. Pupils encourage both classmates and parents to ensure that they are in with a chance to win 'Pal the parrot' for a week.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- better use is made of the early years outdoor learning area to extend the children's learning opportunities so that they can further develop their

mathematical skills

- teachers ensure that all pupils consistently use the agreed school policy for setting out numbers when completing mathematical calculations.

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

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and we talked about the improvements that had been made since the last inspection. I also considered your self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I looked at all safeguarding records and explored your recruitment and vetting procedures. I held a discussion with three middle leaders. I met with six governors, including the chair of the governing body. Together we visited mathematics lessons in all four classes and we sampled books together. I had a discussion with six Year 6 pupils and reviewed the 33 responses on the inspection online survey available to pupils. I also considered the 33 responses submitted by parents through Parent View and 16 responses from the staff questionnaire.