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15 March 2017

John Norton
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Dear Mr Norton

Short inspection of Southville Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

The national assessment results of 2016 raised issues for the school which you, your leaders and governors acknowledged and quickly tackled. You swiftly put in place measures to address weaknesses, which have had a demonstrable effect. For example, you identified that pupils' reading for understanding was an issue. You have provided training to raise the teaching of reading and introduced a tight focus on reading comprehension. You have also provided new materials and approaches which encourage boys in particular. You have set ambitious targets. As a result, pupils' progress in reading and levels of comprehension have improved sharply since September 2016.

This improvement in understanding has also led to pupils showing higher levels of progress with writing and solving word problems in mathematics. To go with developments in reading, you have also made improvements to the mathematics curriculum. Your response, and that of your leaders and governors, to the challenges of 2016, shows that you do not accept anything other than the best for the pupils. The actions taken to raise standards in reading and mathematics have had a clear and marked effect. You are ambitious to ensure that the improvements you have made in these significant areas are sustained and raise rates of progress still further.

At the previous inspection, the school was asked to strengthen teaching and learning and improve the impact of middle leaders. These areas have been addressed. The school is a tolerant and supportive community and pupils can describe how happy they are to be among their friends. They enjoy school and are typically thoughtful and attentive, showing positive attitudes. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and are polite and friendly. They enjoy receiving certificates in recognition for their work or behaviour. Their attitudes reflect the values of the school very well. They were polite, friendly and confident. Levels of attendance at the school are above the national average.

Pupils learn a broad and balanced range of subjects, which includes Spanish. Pupils enjoy the many outings and visits that the school organises. They are looking forward to the forthcoming Year 6 residential trip to an outdoor pursuits centre. The variety of extra-curricular clubs that pupils can choose, including learning to play musical instruments and football, promote their interests and are very popular.

Governors understand their role well and hold the school leadership to account. They were disappointed with the results of 2016 and played a key role in ensuring that improvements were initiated rapidly. They are clear about their vision and speak passionately about the ethos and shared values of the school. They understand and uphold their responsibilities for keeping children safe.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Child protection records are detailed and of high quality. The school works closely with outside agencies and liaises with them quickly in order to keep pupils' safe. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of current guidance and procedures as a result of regular training and updates. Leaders have made sure that pupils know who to speak to if they have any safeguarding concerns. Pupils have a clear understanding of the action they can take to keep themselves safe from harm, for example when using computers and information technology. Pupils told me that they know what to do should any problems occur. They said they felt safe and that school had taught them what to do if they had any worries. They told me that occasionally there are some incidents of misbehaviour, but that these are rare and dealt with swiftly. The governing body checks all safeguarding arrangements regularly during the year.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have taken swift action to improve the teaching of mathematics and reading through significantly strengthening the curriculum and teaching in these areas. The leaders of literacy and mathematics regularly check on progress. They also demonstrate effective methods and set high expectations. Teachers in the school follow their example and, as a result, rates of pupils' progress are rapid.

- The progress of boys, particularly in their reading, and the progress of pupils of middle ability have been the subject of intense focus by the school. For example, boys have been provided with materials and teaching which is more tailored to their interests. This has had a direct impact and raised progress.
- The school works with other partner schools to ensure the accuracy of assessments and progress data. Ambitious targets based on these assessments are set, met and often exceeded. Current information shows strong and sustained progress across the school in reading and mathematics. This was confirmed through observing pupils' responses in classes, hearing them read, and through looking at their books in these subjects.
- The focus on reading and mathematics is clearly evident around the school. For example, Year 6 pupils' thoughtful work about the second world war was reflective and moving, showing a powerful use of vocabulary. In Year 5, pupils confidently demonstrated a range of approaches to solving mathematical challenges with accurate calculations. Their clear explanations and logical descriptions showed fluency and mastery. In Year 3, pupils were seen enthusiastically rehearsing their versions of 'The Three Bears', using play scripts which they had created based on their understanding. In Year 4, pupils were learning how to apply their mental arithmetic skills appropriately. They persisted at their tasks and were fully able to explain their decisions and calculations.
- More widely, leaders have made sure that pupils have access to an interesting and stimulating curriculum, examples of which can be seen through the pupils' work in every classroom. In corridors and on displays there are numerous examples of pupils' written work and responses which reflect their understanding and engagement across the curriculum.
- Pupils from all backgrounds enjoy reading and read well. Younger pupils and those at the early stages of learning to read confidently use the phonics strategies that the school has taught them well. Older pupils and the most able readers read with fluency and expression, read widely and often, and are usually well supported at home, as their reading records show.
- The pupils who read to me were able to answer questions from their books which demonstrated their understanding and comprehension. They have made strong gains in their reading this academic year and were proud to show their skills.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- boys make even more progress in their reading so that they catch up with pupils nationally
- changes to the mathematics curriculum continue to have a strong positive impact on the progress pupils make, particularly for middle-attaining pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Roberts
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector carried out the following activities:

- held meetings with the headteacher and the leadership team
- observed lessons in Years 3 to 6
- looked at pupils' books
- had a discussion with three governors, including the chair of governors
- held meetings with safeguarding leaders, middle managers and pupils
- listened to pupils read
- evaluated recent information about pupils' attendance and progress information.
- considered the views of parents, staff and pupils through discussions and responses to Ofsted's questionnaires.