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Mrs Nicola Rowland  
Headteacher  
Corton CE Primary School  
The Street  
Corton  
Lowestoft  
Suffolk  
NR32 5HW

Dear Mrs Rowland

### **Short inspection of Corton CE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 March 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 July 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education at the school since the previous inspection. Along with other leaders, you have ensured that high standards have been maintained along with a highly inclusive ethos, which underpins all aspects of the school's work. As one of the parents wrote, 'Corton is everything a primary school should be. The children enjoy their time there and the importance of learning is instilled within them.'

At your previous inspection, in July 2012, you were asked to improve arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. You were also specifically asked to improve the teaching of phonics. Over the intervening years, you have worked effectively to address both issues. Phonics teaching is now effective and pupils make a good start in their early reading as a result. You have introduced good processes for reviewing the work of the school. An improved system for tracking pupils' progress provides useful information for you and other leaders on the impact of your work. Through performance management, you agree and monitor very specific targets with each member of staff that focus on improving expertise in teaching, learning and assessment. This has had a significant and positive impact on achievement across the school.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of a high quality. Policies and records are checked regularly to ensure that they comply with current requirements and regular training has ensured that staff and governors fully understand their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. The school keeps precise records of the checks that are made on adults before they take up their posts at the school. As a result of these actions, pupils say they feel safe while in school and the vast majority of parents agree.

## **Inspection findings**

- In order to establish whether the school remains good, I followed a number of specific lines of enquiry during this inspection. The first was to see whether the teaching of phonics is effective. This was a key issue to come out of the previous inspection. I also looked closely at the school's systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. This was also an area for improvement that was identified at the previous inspection. I looked closely at the progress that pupils were making across key stage 1 as the results in 2016 were below the national average. I evaluated the school's safeguarding procedures and also considered how well pupils achieved across the wider curriculum. This was to establish whether or not the school is improving and moving towards outstanding.
- Children get off to a flying start in the Reception class. Very good systems are in place to ensure a smooth transition from home to school. During the summer term, children spend three days in school with a parent. Children learn about routines and meet their new friends, while parents get to know staff, provide information about their children's interests and abilities and find out about how their children's learning will be promoted. Children make good progress across the early years in all areas of learning because teaching is effective and the provision meets their needs extremely well.
- Pupils in the early years and Year 1 develop an excellent understanding of phonics. Teachers are highly skilled in this area and good support is provided by teaching assistants. Pupils are taught well and the proportion of pupils who passed the phonics check at the end of Year 1 was above the national average in 2016. As pupils move through school, they develop into successful and enthusiastic readers. Many older pupils read widely and often.
- The good progress that pupils make in developing their early reading skills is matched by progress in writing. Although results at the end of key stage 1 were below the national average in 2016, effective teaching is resulting in pupils now making good progress in Year 1 and Year 2.
- As they move into key stage 2, pupils are given regular opportunities to write at length and for different purposes in English lessons. The quality of written work is celebrated in displays across the school, in classrooms and corridors. Work seen from some of the most able pupils was of a particularly high standard. However, too often teachers fail to follow the school's marking policy by

identifying errors in punctuation, grammar and spelling. This restricts the progress that some pupils make.

- Mathematics is taught well. The work that teachers set regularly provides good levels of challenge for pupils of all abilities. Pupils are given regular opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills to solve problems. The work seen in books during this inspection showed that pupils are making good progress.
- The school ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A strong collaborative ethos is evident in all aspects of the school's work. British values, such as tolerance and respect for those who hold different values or beliefs, are promoted through strategies such as 'multi-faith days', when visitors come into school to help pupils to develop an understanding of major world religions. Pupils have a real pride in their school. They attend regularly and have good attitudes to learning.
- The school has a well-planned curriculum. However, the quality of work in subjects such as science, history and geography often fails to reflect the high standards seen in pupils' English and mathematics books. Not enough attention has been given to developing good practice in these subjects and pupils' progress is limited as a result.
- The curriculum is enriched by various activities both during the school day, and in before and after school clubs. Each morning, before school, pupils are given the opportunity to take part in a sports club through which they are introduced to a variety of different sports and games. Pupils in Year 6 take part in a residential visit, where they take part in various outdoor adventure activities.
- Governance is effective. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and understand the needs of the community it serves. They visit the school regularly to make checks on key aspects of the school's work. For example, they do a termly audit of the school's safeguarding arrangements and regularly review the school's assessment information. Governors ensure that they keep up to date with relevant training, for example, all of those spoken to during this inspection had recently attended safeguarding training. Governors share the leadership team's high ambitions to improve the school further.

### **Next steps for the school**

In order to ensure that the school continues to improve, school leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is clear guidance, in the school's marking and assessment policy, on how teachers should respond to errors in punctuation, grammar and spelling
- subject leaders are more effective in improving the quality of work in their specific areas.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher and the senior teacher. I also met with five governors, including the chair and vice chair of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and pupils from Year 5 and Year 6. I scrutinised a range of documents, policies and assessment information. I made short visits to all classrooms to observe teaching and learning and looked at the work in pupils' books. I listened to pupils reading from Year 3, Year 5 and Year 6.