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Mr Michael Hawkins
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hawkins

Short inspection of Stoberry Park School

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 2018, 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 September 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Supported by the governing body, you have re-formed the school's leadership structure. The recently appointed assistant headteachers have clear responsibilities and the senior teachers are enthusiastic about their new roles, which focus on special educational needs (SEN) and disadvantaged pupils. This has brought about a greater staff insight of pupils' knowledge and understanding. Consequently, there is greater cohesion across the curriculum and improved pupil transition through the school.

The governing body has also seen significant change in its membership. New governors bring particular skills and experience, which they use to hold leaders increasingly to account. Governors are committed to improving the quality of education at the school. They have actively sought out training and other schools from which they can learn.

You continue to review and improve the curriculum. Through the work of your team, pupils are improving their 'can-do' attitude, and their self-esteem is rising. Increasingly, they persevere when they tackle challenges and are more courageous in taking risks. 'Quests', your programme that explores pupils' understanding of the world now and in the past, has been reviewed and enhanced. This is developing pupils' inquisitive skills and pupils talk positively about their visits, including to Legoland and to the circus.

You have taken action to address the areas for improvement at the previous inspection. More pupils are achieving the higher scores than those levels seen typically nationally. Teachers are increasingly confident in planning learning that deepens pupils'

understanding, particularly in their topic work and when writing.

Pupils are attentive in class and work well with one another. They show kindness, and support each other well. Behaviour at the school is good. Pupils are keen to succeed and complete their work to a high standard.

Safeguarding is effective.

The nurturing culture of the school is highly respected by many pupils. Those who are new to the school comment on how they are welcomed warmly and their parents and carers comment on how quickly their children settle.

Staff are suitably trained and alert to the indicators of harm. At times of crises in families, your staff are swift and effective in their support. The school makes good use of early help to ensure that those families who need help receive it. When necessary, you make good use of strong relationships with social care and the police to protect pupils effectively. As a result, pupils are safe. Pupils, and the vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View, report the school to be a safe place. However, you are not complacent and recognise that there is more work to do with pupils and their parents to ensure that they are aware of some of the risks that they may face in the future.

Safeguarding records are maintained to a high standard. You have ensured that all the necessary checks have been carried out on potential members of staff.

Inspection findings

- You rightly recognised that pupils' spelling is not as strong as it needs to be. Following a period of research, you have designed a common approach to the teaching of spelling across the school. Accompanied by an increased emphasis on pupils' accurate use of punctuation, this strategy is having a demonstrable impact. Pupils are improving their accuracy in both spelling and punctuation over time. Pupils' grammar remains strong. They are aware of tenses and correct use of prepositions, and consistently demonstrate their understanding in their writing.
- Teachers expect pupils to write at length regularly. They provide precise feedback, which pupils take on board and correct and improve their own work or that of their classmates. As a result, pupils are successful in applying their learning about spellings and punctuation.
- In 2017, pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 did not make the same level of progress in mathematics as they had done in previous years. Leaders were swift to analyse why this was and have taken actions to arrest this decline. This is particularly seen in the improved application of pupils' calculation skills and their ability to solve problems. However, this is not routinely the case in every class and although pupils' progress in mathematics is improving, it is still improving too slowly.
- Older pupils, especially the most able pupils, are not routinely identifying efficient methods to tackle problems. In key stage 2, pupils' understanding of their mathematics is overly mechanical and pupils are not confident in explaining their rationale. Overall, unlike in writing, the school's strategy for mathematics is not clear

or effective in developing pupils' higher level skills and understanding.

- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as their classmates or other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics. You have prioritised improving the achievement of these pupils in the school's development plan. In response to this and because the number of pupils entitled to free school meals is increasing, governors recently appointed a pupil premium champion. This has raised the profile of these pupils and ensured that teaching staff are fully aware of who the disadvantaged pupils in their class are.
- The barriers that disadvantaged pupils face are not yet fully understood. You recognise that poor attendance is a factor and have taken action to improve this. However, senior leaders' identification of the individual hurdles that these pupils need to overcome lacks precision. Consequently, teachers are not planning learning well enough to meet the needs of this growing group of pupils. As a result, many disadvantaged pupils are not making the accelerated progress they need to, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Governors and leaders are not able to demonstrate the impact of the additional funding the school receives for these pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a coherent strategy to improve the quality of teaching of mathematics is fully and consistently implemented across the school
- pupil premium funding is used effectively to accelerate disadvantaged pupils' progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Iain Freeland
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, you joined me in observing learning. We looked at the work of a number of pupils and many read their work to me. I spoke with pupils throughout the day. I met with a number of parents at the start and end of the school day. Meetings were held with you, senior leaders, the leader with responsibility for disadvantaged pupils, and with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also spoke with a representative of the local authority by telephone.

I scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school's own analysis of

strengths and weaknesses, assessment information and safeguarding records. I considered the views of 111 parents who responded to Parent View, 23 members of staff who completed Ofsted's staff questionnaire, and the 51 pupils who completed the online pupil questionnaire.