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Mrs Ly Toom
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Dear Mrs Toom

Short inspection of Abbey Road Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 May 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment in 2017, you have provided clear, effective leadership and you have worked with determination and commitment to make sure that the school has continued to improve. You and other leaders have successfully tackled the areas for improvement from the previous inspection.

Staff work together to support pupils' learning throughout the school. Teachers are beginning to embrace the changes you have made to monitoring and tracking systems, which will enable them to accurately assess and accelerate the learning of pupils.

After the last inspection, leaders were asked to ensure that teachers give pupils opportunities to write in subjects other than English, and to adapt teaching to meet pupils' needs. Most teachers plan creatively across the curriculum in order to provide interesting and exciting lessons for pupils. Pupils expressed their pleasure in being able to improve their writing skills in topics such as the Second World War and a study of Ernest Shackleton. Where teaching is highly effective, teachers clearly explain what they would like pupils to do, and use questions to ensure that pupils understand. When pupils do not understand what they need to do, teachers quickly alter lessons to provide alternative support in order to secure learning.

Leaders were also asked to sharpen school improvement planning. The school's self-evaluation and the development plan are linked together and include

measurable targets for pupils' progress. Staff performance management targets are closely linked to the school's development priorities.

You and other school leaders have carefully identified the key priorities to maintain and improve pupils' learning. You have recently introduced a more rigorous system to track pupils' outcomes. On occasion, assessment information is not used as well as it could be to identify what pupils should learn next. New systems to help teachers identify next steps are beginning to show early signs of success. However, it is too early to see the impact on the progress pupils make.

You provide the governing body with up-to-date assessment information to hold you and other leaders to account. Governors are well aware of the school's priorities and understand what you and other leaders are doing to bring about change and continued success. The governing body regularly reviews the school development plan and checks that actions are taking place, and are having the effect intended. Governors provide leaders with appropriate levels of challenge if actions are not proving effective enough.

Parents and carers believe that the school has a family feel and that their children are looked after well. They know that they can talk to a member of staff if they have a concern and they told me that staff deal quickly with any problems. One parent said that, 'the ethos of the school isn't just something that is in a policy. You can see it in action everywhere you go.'

Pupils I met with spoke very highly of the school and expressed how happy they are. They enjoy the many different opportunities they receive, such as extracting DNA from banana peel. They are keen to take part in the wide range of clubs and trips, such as visits to a farm where they held a snake, their experiences enacting battles as the Roman army and their visits to different places of worship. They explained how these experiences have enhanced their enjoyment of learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding is effective and remains a priority of all staff. Members of the governing body check that all staff receive appropriate training in safeguarding. You regularly ensure that any concerns that staff have for the well-being of pupils are recorded accurately. Any actions required to maintain the welfare of pupils are completed briskly. You and other leaders know families well and you liaise with external agencies when required. You and the emotional literacy support assistant actively seek ways to help and support families at the school. You have established several different groups to help improve and nurture the welfare and happiness of pupils.

Pupils told me that they feel safe in school. Staff teach them how to protect themselves from risks, including when using the internet or a mobile phone. Pupils are respectful to others, including those from different backgrounds and cultures to their own. One child said, 'Even if you do look different or act differently, you should be treated equally as we are all the same.'

Inspection findings

- The progress pupils make in writing, including pupils who have high prior attainment, has improved since the last inspection. Leaders have provided training that has enabled teachers to plan opportunities for pupils to write in different subjects. You have also ensured that teachers watch each other teach and share good practice. You have accurately identified that writing remains a priority for further improvement as the progress pupils make in writing remains average, whilst progress in reading and mathematics is well above the national average.
- In autumn 2017, leaders collaborated with other local schools to standardise assessment across the schools. Some teachers are not yet using this standardisation consistently to assess pupils' work. As a result, some assessment information is not accurate enough to enable teachers to set work that challenges all pupils.
- Historically, the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development in early years has been higher than the national average. This remains the case, although the proportion attaining a good level of development has decreased slightly during the last two years. The early years leader uses assessment information effectively to monitor the progress children are making and to plan for children's next steps in learning.
- Staff in early years use effective prompting and questioning to develop children's learning through their play. Staff develop the language and communication skills of children by providing rich and varied vocabulary that children then use confidently. High-quality learning opportunities are provided in early years for children to develop their understanding. Role play is used effectively to explore learning and to develop children's personal, social and emotional skills.
- Pupils' attainment in key stage 1 in mathematics fell in 2017. Leaders identified that they needed to make changes to the teaching of mathematics and ensure that teachers planned for the needs of pupils. As a result of changes made to the teaching of mathematics, pupils are now more confident in solving mathematical problems. Pupils' workbooks demonstrate that pupils are making good progress when compared with their different starting points.
- Leaders also identified that the system for monitoring pupils' progress and attainment was not working well enough to allow them to check the progress of pupils who have low prior attainment. A new system has now been introduced; however, leaders and other staff are not using this consistently. Owing to this, some pupils are not making enough progress from the end of early years to the end of key stage 1.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress in writing is accelerated by ensuring that the teachers use their knowledge of what pupils can already do to set tasks that meet pupils' needs

- assessment information is used carefully by leaders and teachers to quickly identify when pupils are not making as much progress as they should.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Fitzwilliam
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, other leaders and governors to discuss the school's progress since the last inspection. I met with groups of parents at the beginning of the school day. I spoke with pupils informally during the day and held a meeting with a group of pupils from a range of year groups. I scrutinised a wide range of information, including policies and records relating to safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation, its plans for improvement and its review of the spending of the pupil premium and the physical education and sport premium reported on the school's website. I looked at assessment information for previous year groups and those pupils currently in the school. I considered the responses to Parent View and Ofsted's free-text service. Together, we did a focused walk around the whole school and observed learning in several classes over all age groups.