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Mrs Caron Wagstaff
Headteacher
Heathlands Primary School
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Dear Mrs Wagstaff

Short inspection of Heathlands Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 June 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 January 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

Heathlands Primary School is a happy, safe and inclusive learning environment. You have provided clear direction and vision which encourage all members of the community to aim high and succeed. Parents, carers and pupils value the support they are given by a knowledgeable and caring staff. You and your staff work relentlessly to support families and pupils who have a range of complex needs. The welcoming environment means that all pupils are accepted and given every opportunity to flourish.

You have high expectations for all groups of pupils and ensure that individual pupil needs are addressed through regular planning meetings. All staff are clear about the actions they need to take to increase the progress of pupils who are at risk of underachieving. The governing body is capable and well informed. They offer support and challenge in equal measure and are valued partners in the school.

Indoor space and interactive displays are utilised successfully to encourage independent learning. Pupils value their learning and appreciate the additional help they are given, especially if they have been absent, which helps them to catch up. Pupils appreciate the flexible approach to the uniform policy which allows them to express their individuality. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance for the majority of pupils is in line with the national average.

You have built a strong leadership team and together you have responded well towards the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Subject leaders are knowledgeable and outward looking, seeking ways to develop practice from other schools. They monitor their subject effectively and have a good understanding of where to target resources for further improvement. Governors provide strong support for you and your team, utilising their expertise where appropriate. They undertake their roles seriously and dedicate time to understanding the school.

You have invested in developing and enhancing the quality of teaching in mathematics. Resources have been purchased to allow opportunities to develop greater fluency, practise problem solving and develop mastery in mathematics. Staff are now confident and skilled in their teaching of this subject, which has resulted in increased progress for all groups of pupils across the school.

Following the last inspection, you were asked to improve the use of English grammar in writing. There has been a successful focus on the consistent application of technical language, such as 'fronted adverbial' or 'digraph'. Ambitious vocabulary is taught on a daily basis and standards in writing have improved in all year groups. However, you recognise that further work is needed, particularly in phonics, to raise standards in writing throughout the school further.

Significant time and energy have been devoted to improving the outdoor environment in Nursery and Reception. Greater emphasis is given to open-ended activities. Resources have been purchased, for example crates and pipes, to allow children to work together and lead their own learning. A weekly afternoon session inviting Reception parents into school is increasing in popularity. You realise that this initiative would work well in Nursery to help engage parents from the start of school.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a vigilant culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff and governors are trained well, are clear about their responsibilities and are knowledgeable about the signs and symbols of potential abuse. Brisk referrals are made to agencies and you and the deputy headteacher work closely with support services to keep pupils safe. Good communication through weekly updates ensure that all staff are aware of any changes in circumstances and help to protect the safety and welfare of pupils and families. All records are detailed, securely kept and monitored by the senior leadership and safeguarding governor.

A very large proportion of parents who responded to Parent View confirmed that their child is happy, safe and well looked after in school. One or two parents expressed some concerns about the behaviour of a tiny minority of individuals. However, I spoke to many pupils during my visit who said that they felt safe in school and that they would know who to turn to if they were worried about something. Pupils are clear about the expectations for behaviour and what happens

if the rules are broken. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View said they would recommend the school to other parents.

Pupils are well prepared to face a wide range of situations they may encounter in the future, including fire, water, railway tracks and social media. Older pupils appreciated the recent hard-hitting messages from a theatre company related to grooming and obesity. They said the workshops were really helpful.

Inspection findings

- The significant majority of children enter the Nursery school with skills in all areas of learning below and often well below those typically found nationally. Initially, a considerable amount of time is spent helping the children to develop their social skills and become ready to learn. Many are then able to make good progress. However, you have identified that progress is not rapid enough and have plans to introduce new initiatives to improve practice in the new academic year.
- Attainment in the phonics check has been below the national average for the past three years. Recently, staff have undertaken training and there have been changes in the approach to teaching phonics. This is beginning to have a positive impact on improving reading skills. In order to bring about rapid improvement in this area, you hope to explore other models of phonics teaching.
- Pupils at the end of key stage 1 have made good progress from their starting points. However, their attainment is not yet in line with that of their peers nationally in reading and writing. Progress in mathematics is more rapid as a result of the significant improvement in teaching in this subject. By the end of key stage 2, pupils are attaining more in line with national standards in all subjects.
- Teachers plan interesting and engaging lessons. Improved written and verbal feedback has had a positive impact on raising standards. Pupils who have struggled with a concept are given additional tuition either straight away or in the afternoon. This is helping to keep pupils on track and is having a positive impact on self-esteem.
- There has been a focus this year on developing reading skills, which is beginning to improve understanding and comprehension skills. The pupils I spoke with all enjoyed their reading and could name several favourite authors. They enjoyed the texts recommended to them by their teachers. However, leaders acknowledge that they need to do more to ignite a love of reading in pupils who are reluctant to read.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective, enabling them to make good progress from their starting points. The teacher who coordinates the support for these pupils has a good knowledge of the individuals. Plans for pupils are detailed and there is a comprehensive training schedule for all staff to help them understand a variety of conditions such as autism, ADHD or attachment issues. Parents are delighted by the progress their children make and are full of praise for the staff.

- There is a key focus on supporting disadvantaged pupils. Detailed plans demonstrate the significant and varied help given to this group of pupils, who often experience several complex barriers to learning. Governors ensure that the funding is spent effectively not only to accelerate academic progress but also to ensure that their emotional needs are well supported to help them engage with their learning.
- Procedures for encouraging attendance are robust and the school has effective and motivating strategies to sustain good and improving levels of attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is increased engagement with parents from Nursery to help them understand the importance of helping their child at home and to develop a love of learning
- phonics teaching is consistently and expertly taught so that it is sharp and precise to enable pupils acquire strong phonic skills
- there is a continued focus on increasing vocabulary and encouraging all pupils to develop more sophisticated reading skills as well as fostering a love of literature.

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

Kate Nash
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, we discussed your self-evaluation and development plans. I also shared my key lines of enquiry with you. You accompanied me as I visited each class in the school, spending a short time in each. I viewed pupils' behaviour in lessons and spent time on the playground during lunchtime discussing their views of school. I met with several members of the school staff, three governors, including the acting chair, a group of pupils and a number of parents. I held discussions with different leaders about safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, the curriculum and measuring pupils' progress. I viewed a range of documents and considered information related to attendance and how the pupil premium funding is spent. I held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. Together we looked at a wide range of pupils' work. I examined the school's website to check that it meets the requirements on the publication of specified information. I analysed the responses to Ofsted's parent, staff and pupil questionnaires and any free-text comments.