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Mrs Louise Spall
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Dear Mrs Spall

Short inspection of Somerleyton Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 25 September 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You and your governors are highly committed to leading an inclusive school. You are supported well by the class teachers, who have all been in post since the previous inspection. Your ambition for every child to have an excellent all-rounded education is infectious. Staff, parents, governors and pupils are all committed to continually improving the school. One parent said, 'I really appreciate how the older children look after the younger ones.' Pupils told me that they feel safe and secure in school and teachers will always make time to listen to them.

Governance of the school is highly effective. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and are particularly keen to ensure that all pupils make good progress. They check reports on the progress of pupils termly and ensure that appropriate support is given where needed. Governors carry out regular visits to the school to monitor progress within each area of the school improvement plan. They engage in an annual self-evaluation exercise which results in an action plan for their own development.

Leaders, staff and governors have largely dealt with the areas of improvement identified at the previous inspection. Since the previous inspection, progress in reading has matched that in writing and mathematics. Small numbers in each year group mean that actual scores at

the end of Year 6 can vary year by year, but analysis of school tracking systems, book scrutiny and discussions with pupils showed that the current progress in reading remains strong. Improvements since the previous inspection have included strengthening strategies for teaching reading through both guided groups and individual sessions with the teacher. A strong focus on improving the pupils' phonics skills has improved outcomes in this area and enabled pupils to move on more quickly in their reading development. The school has also worked hard to develop an enthusiasm for reading through the purchase of new books, regular book review assemblies and developments within the library.

Pupils behave well in lessons and while moving around the school. Relationships at all levels are respectful. Pupils are polite and kind. At breaktime, pupils play happily with one another, with older pupils including younger ones in their games. The playground is organised very well and there is a wide range of activities set out to interest the pupils during the lunch break. The pupils that I spoke to told me that they find lessons interesting and challenging. They said that teachers really care about them and want them to do their best at all times.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have established a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. Staff receive regular, good-quality training and are vigilant in monitoring the well-being of pupils. Regular checks ensure that records are maintained to a good standard, including those relating to staff vetting and recruitment. Governors take their monitoring role seriously and receive regular reports, which they corroborate by visits to the school.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through a well-planned curriculum. Staff teach pupils how to keep safe both online and in the wider community. They have ensured that the teaching of e-safety receives a high profile. Pupils say that they know who to go to if they have a problem. Many parents I spoke with, and almost all who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said their children are happy and feel safe at school.

High-quality, detailed records show that you manage concerns swiftly and understand the procedures for referring pupils to other agencies. Good links have been made with a range of external agencies who provide additional support to families where needed.

Inspection findings

- At the previous inspection, leaders were asked to ensure that most-able pupils achieved as well as they could. Analysis of results since the previous inspection shows that the percentage achieving the higher standard in the Year 6 tests has been broadly in line with the national

average over the last three years in reading and mathematics. In writing, the proportion of pupils reaching greater depth has been above the national average.

- In assessments at the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils reaching greater depth has been high for reading, writing and mathematics. A key challenge for the school is to ensure that most-able pupils in Year 3 and 4 are supported so that they continue to make good progress towards the higher attainment at the end of Year 6.
- You have put a range of strategies in place to support the progress of most-able pupils, and this group of pupils are currently making good progress. Most-able pupils are achieving well because you have developed the good subject knowledge of teachers and made effective use of support staff to challenge them. You also use challenging targets which are known and understood by pupils and have high expectations of everyone within the school community.
- Your focus on developing the abilities of most-able pupils is evident in all classes. They and their teachers have clearly defined expectations of what they want to achieve. Pupils have targeted learning opportunities to help with producing work of greater depth than would normally be expected. They are encouraged to develop good self-awareness of their strengths and the next steps in their learning.
- You have identified that you want to support pupils in their ability to solve more complex mathematical problems. During the year, you plan to support pupils in their reading and understanding of the questions and their ability to hold information in their working memory.
- During the day we investigated the quality of teaching and learning with regard to spelling, punctuation and grammar. This was because in 2018 there was a dip in results following very high outcomes in previous years. We looked at the reasons for this dip, which was caused by the particular needs of that cohort of pupils, and spent some time investigating standards across the school.
- We found that the progress pupils are making in this area is good. Regular grammar lessons are planned as part of the curriculum. You and governors monitor those pupils who need additional support and ensure that extra help is given. Every six weeks pupils are assessed for their ability to spell and to apply their knowledge when writing. Discussions with pupils show that not only do they know how to spell their key words, but they can also explain the meaning and how they would use these words to improve the quality of their writing.
- The curriculum is a real strength of the school. You have planned it effectively so that pupils enjoy learning and are supported in making good or better progress in a wide range of subjects. You and all the staff have high expectations of what can be achieved. This is evident not only in the progress pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics but also in areas such as music, computing, science and technology. In music,

every pupil gets to learn an instrument for a period of five years. This programme of musical development is planned with a clear rationale and provided free of charge through support from the parents' association. Similarly, the quality of computing within the school is a strength. Good links have been made with a range of institutions to develop the quality of science across the school and many pupils develop good engineering skills.

- The curriculum has been successfully designed to help pupils get a good understanding of life in modern Britain. Lessons are planned to support the development of pupils' understanding in areas such as the rule of law and an appreciation of multicultural Britain. You have developed a range of school trips and visitors to the school that support these aims. All pupils are provided with the opportunity to visit the opera and ballet every year.
- You have taken a deliberate decision to run a small early years class, which currently has five children. You and the class teacher are very keen to give them a high-quality start to school life and have been successful in designing a curriculum that meets the needs of all children in this class well. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has risen every year since the previous inspection and is now above the national average.
- During our visit to the Reception class, children were engaged in a wide range of productive activities. You have worked hard to develop plans for the learning of each child based on their individual needs and there is a keen focus on helping children move their learning forward based on areas that interest them. For example, one child was observed to be using the tablet to engage in basic computer coding. He was being encouraged to solve problems and code solutions.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they embed improvements to the teaching of reading and mathematics so that the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards at the end of key stage 2 in both areas increases further
- they develop the ability of pupils to solve the most complex mathematical problems.

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

Yours sincerely

Duncan Ramsey
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and representatives of the governing body, including the chair. I held a telephone conversation with your school improvement adviser. I observed pupils' learning in all classes and spoke to pupils from every class. I looked at a range of pupils' work. I spent time before school talking to parents and observed pupils as they moved around school. I observed pupils outside during break and lunchtime. I scrutinised a range of documents such as the school development plan, the school's own self-evaluation of its performance, and records of checks made on the suitability of staff to work with children. I looked at documentation relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. I took account of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, from 21 parents, and considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.