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Mr James Wallace
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Dear Mr James Wallace

Short inspection of College Road Primary 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your vision for College Road Primary is determined. You lead by example. Your work is highly valued by staff, governors and parents. You are unrelenting in your resolve to secure the best possible outcomes for all pupils in your care. Consequently, pupils across the school achieve well.

You have a comprehensive and realistic understanding of the school's current performance. You are alert to any decline in pupils' achievement and respond quickly through the implementation of robust and well-targeted actions. As a result, you have successfully tackled the areas for improvement in the previous inspection, while maintaining the school's strengths. You recognise that aspects of pupil's writing in key stage 2 are not well enough developed. You also recognise that the most able pupils do not receive sufficient challenge in mathematics at key stage 1.

You and your governors have worked resolutely to secure improvements in teaching and pupils' learning, and to establish an effective working partnership with parents. Governors are aspirational and outward looking. They are adept at holding school leaders to account for all aspects of the school's work. They provide leaders with an appropriate balance of challenge and support. Governors play an integral role in further improving the quality of education that the school provides.

You know your school and the area it serves well. You have the support of a highly dedicated and hard-working staff. All staff who responded to the survey said that

they enjoy working at this school and are proud to be a staff member. They unanimously agree that they are treated fairly and are well supported.

Pupils are welcoming, well mannered and courteous. They behave well. Pupils work hard and have very positive attitudes. My visit to the early years setting highlighted children's interest and engagement in their learning. Staff are attentive to children's needs. They listen carefully and encourage children to talk about what they are doing. Children's good behaviour in the early years shows that they feel safe. Leaders ensure that staffing levels are sufficient to provide children with suitable care and supervision.

Most parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that pupils are happy, feel safe and are taught well. Parents said that College Road Primary is a caring school where teachers are friendly, professional and supportive. They said that pupils enjoy their learning. For example, a comment written by one parent, typical of many, said, 'The school constantly strives to make learning fun, practical and useful.'

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff place the utmost importance on keeping pupils safe. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have a detailed understanding of the needs of vulnerable pupils and their families. Systems to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm are effective. My discussions with pupils showed that they feel safe and have a trusted adult they can go to with a worry or a concern. They said that adults always do their best to make them feel happy at school.

You ensure that all staff are appropriately trained. Consequently, they understand and implement safeguarding policies and procedures effectively. They have the necessary expertise to recognise the signs of potential abuse quickly. You work effectively with outside agencies and are insistent in securing suitable and timely responses to your concerns. You have appropriate recruitment procedures, which ensure the suitability of your staff to work with children. Governors regularly check the effectiveness of the school's work to keep pupils safe.

Inspection findings

- I examined leaders' actions in ensuring that pupils, including the disadvantaged, make strong progress in writing at key stage 2. Pupils' progress in writing in the 2017 national curriculum assessments was below the national average. Leaders have provided teachers and teaching assistants with the training they need to improve pupils' writing. As a result, staff have the skills and strategies to ensure that pupils achieve well when writing in different genres. Staff have high expectations for what pupils can achieve in writing. They set tasks that provide suitable challenge. As a result, pupils quickly acquire new skills, which they use to develop their ideas effectively.
- Pupils' progress in writing is accelerating. Pupils successfully acquire a range of skills that are appropriate for their age. They use an increasing range of writing

devices and techniques to add meaning to their work and captivate the reader. Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress from their starting points. They quickly develop an understanding of the appropriate and effective use of grammar.

- Pupils now write more frequently for different purposes. Consequently, they master new concepts associated with a range of writing genres successfully. For example, in story writing, pupils describe settings, characters and atmosphere well. They include dialogue to build interest and add meaning. However, pupils do not spell or use punctuation accurately enough or write sufficiently neatly when writing for different purposes.
- I also focused on evaluating leaders' actions in ensuring that pupils, including the most able and the disadvantaged, make strong progress in reading at key stage 1. Leaders have reviewed the school's approaches to reading. They have successfully introduced new initiatives to increase pupils' love of books further. Consequently, pupils now say that they enjoy reading. They read with self-assurance and enthusiasm and check effectively that what they have read makes sense. They answer questions about the text and make inferences with confidence about what is being said and done.
- The most able pupils read with a high degree of fluency and accuracy. They make good use of punctuation marks to add expression to their reading. They demonstrate attributes associated with working at greater depth. For example, they make links with other books they have read. They predict what might happen next, based on what they have read so far. When reading, disadvantaged pupils recognise a wide range of common words instantly. This enables them to read aloud fluently and at an appropriate pace.
- Finally, I examined how well leaders are increasing the rates of progress that key stage 1 pupils, including the most able, make in mathematics. Leaders use a range of precisely targeted actions, such as the use of games to support mathematical learning. These have sustained the good standards evident in key stage 1. Teachers use a wide range of resources and methods, including models, images, apparatus and jottings to teach new concepts. As a result, pupils quickly acquire a good range of skills appropriate to their ages. They apply these well in their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use carefully chosen questions to check pupils' abstract and technical knowledge. They support pupils effectively during lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants notice pupils' misconceptions and deal with them. As a result, they ensure that subsequent lessons build well on what pupils have learned previously. Teachers plan lessons that effectively support pupils to develop their facility and conceptual understanding in mathematics. As a result, pupils make strong progress.
- Pupils routinely apply their skills in mathematics across the wider curriculum and in real-life contexts. This enables them to engage in solving problems and to demonstrate their mathematical reasoning. The most able pupils are very successful. However, they do not receive enough challenge to ensure that they achieve at the greater depth of which they are capable.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of writing in key stage 2 further develops pupils' technical skills in spelling, punctuation and handwriting, by ensuring that these skills are applied consistently in different contexts
- the most able pupils in key stage 1 routinely receive sufficient challenge to ensure that they apply their knowledge, understanding and skills in mathematics at greater depth.

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

Yours sincerely

Neil Swait
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke with you and senior and middle leaders. I also spoke with staff members, three representatives of the governing body, your school improvement officer and pupils from across the school. I made visits to lessons to observe pupils' learning and to scrutinise their work. I also heard pupils read.

I considered a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's development plans, attendance and monitoring records, governor minutes and safeguarding documentation.

In addition, I took account of 65 responses to the Parent View online survey, 30 responses to the staff survey and 171 responses to the pupils' survey.