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Polly Kitson
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Dear Ms Kitson

Short inspection of Loxwood Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 December 2016, 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 2011.

This school continues to be good.

Since your recent arrival, you have galvanised the team. Consequently, the school is moving forward with renewed vigour. Very quickly, you have established an accurate view of the school's effectiveness and taken action that has already had a demonstrable impact. You have shown strong judgement in prioritising your actions to ensure that no time has been wasted. One teacher told me how this term they had moved forward at 'tremendous speed', quickly adding 'very positively'. Other teachers agreed. Your careful reflection about not changing too much at once has achieved this balance and made sure that you have taken staff, pupils and parents with you.

You are very clear-sighted about how you can build further on the school's strengths. For example, you are keen to embed a whole-school ethos and approach, securing more consistency for pupils as they move through the school. Your high expectations are evident and leading to notable improvements already in the quality of pupils' work. You recognised, very quickly, that recent data about pupils' performance in writing indicated that this previous priority for the school had not improved well enough. The work of current pupils provides strong evidence that their good rates of progress are superior to those indicated by the past performance data. The previous inspection recommended pupils be given more opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences. Pupils now have a wealth of varied opportunities to write across a range of subjects.

Inspectors also asked school leaders to ensure that mathematics teaching was consistently good and that the most able pupils be given work that matched their abilities. Mathematics teaching is effective. Teachers ensure that mathematics learning builds systematically in logical sequences. The learning of key skills and concepts is interspersed frequently with opportunities for pupils to use and apply what they have learned in different contexts. Pupils engage enthusiastically in rich mathematical discussion and are not fazed when they are required to use reasoning skills, including the most able. Work in the books of most-able pupils shows how they grapple with increasingly challenging tasks. However, although the progress of most-able pupils so far this year is good and improving, this has not been sustained over time to ensure that they really excel across a range of subjects.

Pupils are motivated and enthused by their learning and behave well. They get on keenly with tasks that demand they use their skills in real-life contexts, for example interpreting timetables or working out sale prices. Your observations over the course of this term, echoed by teachers, tell you that pupils are now much more engaged in their learning than they were previously. You and your governors are keen to use measurable evidence about pupils' progress to be absolutely certain how well new strategies are working. This vital information is starting to emerge from the school's newly improved tracking of pupils' progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

On arrival, you made safeguarding your top priority. This has heightened the awareness of staff and governors in this area. You reviewed safeguarding procedures, tightening them and making them more systematic. Rigorous checks on the suitability of all adults are recorded clearly and methodically on the single central register. You have ensured that policies, procedures and staff training takes account of the latest guidance. Adults are vigilant and make use of school systems to express concerns. Record-keeping is systematic. Your documentation shows how leaders pursue any concerns in a timely manner. As the designated leader for safeguarding, you demonstrate considerable tenacity to protect pupils that may be at risk.

Pupils feel safe in school. They are confident that adults will listen to any concerns. They also feel assured that adults will know how to sort out any issues successfully, including any rare bullying that may occur. Pupils appreciate how the school's anti-bullying week helped deepen their understanding of the different forms that bullying can take and how to prevent it. Pupils are aware of the principles of how to keep safe when using new technologies and can outline important 'dos' and 'don'ts'.

Inspection findings

- Children make a good start in the early years. Adults' meaningful interactions with children as they play extend their learning well. They both support children who may need extra help, and provide additional challenge for the most able children. Adults prompt with new ideas and encourage children to solve their own problems. For example, one boy was encouraged to think through for himself the

best way to dry his wet sleeves after he'd been experimenting busily with drainpipes, balls and water.

- The Reception teacher uses her detailed knowledge of individual children to meet their differing needs well. Adults' plentiful assessments of children's capabilities cover a broad range of learning. The teacher uses these carefully to identify gaps in children's knowledge, skills and understanding and target their next steps. In linking these assessments with her planning strongly, she provides the direct teaching or opportunities within the environment for children to progress well. For example, children engage enthusiastically in the opportunities for writing and mathematics, both inside and outside.
- Provisional results at the end of key stage 1 for 2016 indicate that pupils did not do as well in writing and mathematics as they should have done. The work produced by these pupils this term in Year 3 shows that they are catching up quickly, and differences compared with national expectations are diminishing. Current Year 2 pupils, particularly boys, were highly motivated by a non-fiction writing task. Pupils enthusiastically recalled what they had researched about arctic animals. Work in their books shows good progress over time, with increasingly accurate sentences. Pupils' developing use of conjunctions and connectives is beginning to extend their sentences and make their writing flow.
- Achievement in reading has continued to be a real strength because pupils' strong progress over time has been sustained for longer than in other subjects. Across the school, pupils have very positive attitudes to reading. Older and most-able pupils read with fluency and expression. Pupils are very clear that reading has a high priority in the school and that they read frequently. Teachers take care to ensure that book areas are inviting and well organised.
- Pupils use their phonic knowledge to read and spell increasingly well. Although results of the Year 1 phonics screening check dipped below the national average in 2016, this reflected a higher level of need and lower starting points within this particular cohort. Current Reception and Year 1 pupils are progressing well in phonics and on track to reverse this dip.
- Few disadvantaged pupils attend the school, with none in some cohorts. They make good progress and are represented among the most-able pupils. Pupils are challenged to do well at their appropriate and differing levels. For example, this ranges from writing detailed explanations in science to receiving clear, precise and focused support to secure the necessary small steps of progress from much lower starting points in mathematics.
- Pupils engage in animated mathematical discussions as they tackle thought-provoking tasks that require them to reason or solve multi-stage problems. Most-able pupils draw confidently on different methods, for example interchanging fractions and decimals to work out the answer.
- Teachers find varied ways to challenge and engage pupils, including the most able. For example, pupils learn how to design and create their own line graphs to present their results in science, or make and write comparisons. I observed Year 2 pupils reading fluently to find relevant information for their fact files. Most-able writers in Year 3 are making good progress using a broadening range of

ambitious vocabulary and organising their writing into effective paragraphs.

- The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is very low. Parents and governors told me how they have noticed that leadership and provision for these pupils is improving, with pupils' individual needs better identified and met. I saw pupils being supported well in lessons.
- Most pupils attend regularly. Overall attendance figures have been above the national average in recent years, and the proportion of pupils that are frequently absent has been lower. Leaders keep a close track of individuals where lower attendance is a cause for concern, including for disadvantaged pupils. The small numbers involved when comparing the attendance of particular groups, such as disadvantaged pupils, mean that statistical comparisons can be misleading.
- The governing body provides effective support for the work of the school. When recruiting the new headteacher, governors had a clear view of the sort of person that they wanted to appoint. The renewed momentum of improvement in the school indicates that a rigorous recruitment process, supported by the local authority, has secured a strong appointment.
- You share, with your governors, a sharp awareness of the strategic role and functions of the governing body. Governors have a secure grasp of the school's statutory performance data and are very keen to interrogate the more detailed assessment information emerging from the newly improved tracking. They share your desire to focus ever more sharply on the impact of actions on improving pupils' outcomes. At the time of my visit, you and governors were aware that aspects of the school's website did not comply with the information that should be published. You were confident that you were on track to have all of the required information available on the website by the end of 2016.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- most-able pupils, including those that are also disadvantaged, excel across the curriculum
- they implement plans to check thoroughly the impact of strategies on improving pupils' outcomes.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for West Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Clive Dunn
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, you accompanied me as I visited all classes. As part of these observations, I talked to pupils about their learning, reviewed their work and heard them read. I also looked at a range of pupils' work on display and when meeting groups of pupils and teachers. I held further discussions with you, your deputy, other staff, the chair of the governing body and other governors, and a representative of the local authority. I spoke with parents informally at the start of the day. I took account of 52 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire as well as 65 questionnaire responses from pupils and 13 from staff. I considered all of the written comments that were added to these alongside other inspection evidence. I reviewed the school's website and sampled a range of documents and records, including some related to safeguarding and your own summary of the school's effectiveness. Through these activities, I focused particularly on writing and mathematics, disadvantaged pupils, the most able and safeguarding.