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21 March 2019

Mrs Susan Mumby
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Mumby

Short inspection of Strawberry Fields Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 2019, 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 2015.

This school continues to be good.

You, your staff and governors have successfully maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Pupils benefit significantly from all that the school provides to support their academic achievements and personal development. They know that learning is important and gain a secure grounding in their basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils engage enthusiastically in all aspects of school life and are a credit to the school and their parents. They try hard in lessons, confident that teachers will help them if they find work difficult. Many enjoy the various clubs and activities on offer to extend their experiences and aspirations, for example the debating competition and the 'inspire' day that took place during the inspection. The unveiling of the new library added a real sense of awe and wonder as pupils delighted in discovering the new books at their disposal. Their love of reading is being nurtured effectively. Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 well prepared for the next stage of their education.

You know the school well and have established a strong leadership team to bring about school improvement. Staff morale is high. Staff appreciate all that you do to safeguard their well-being and to support them in their roles. You identify the most urgent priorities to raise pupils' progress precisely, and all leaders check that the actions they take have the impact they should. For example, the greater focus on reading and mathematics resulted in pupils' higher outcomes in 2018. These successes show, unequivocally, that you have built capacity in the school to support sustainable improvement to benefit pupils further. Overall outcomes in 2018, especially for pupils working at greater depth, were above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of both key stages 1 and 2. Leaders, including governors, have the skills and expertise to improve the school further. With effective support and

challenge from governors, and strong commitment from staff, the school's overall effectiveness is improving rapidly. Pupils are making good progress this year, with many working at the higher standard throughout the school.

The school is a happy, friendly place where pupils feel safe and valued. Displays of pupils' work celebrate their efforts, brighten the environment and inspire others to aim high in their learning. Pupils said that teachers plan activities to make lessons relevant, interesting and fun. As some pupils explained, 'We wanted to learn about dinosaurs and space and they just made it happen.' A few did say that sometimes the work is a 'bit easy', and they would like more challenge. Pupils extend their learning through enrichment activities that include sports clubs, music and school trips. They run fundraising events to buy play equipment for the school and to support charities. Playground 'Yellow Coats' make sure pupils play sensibly and safely and everyone has someone to play with. They have a mature understanding of their responsibility to others in school and beyond.

Your expectations of staff are high. You are very mindful of their individual needs. Staff share the same high aspirations that you have for the pupils. Staff have access to the support and training they need to improve their practice. They enjoy the comradeship you foster through teamwork. Middle leaders support you in monitoring teaching and learning and identify where pupils are at risk of falling behind. The quality of teaching over time is good but there are occasions where pupils could be challenged further. For example, in mathematics pupils are not always as confident as they might be in explaining how they might tackle multi-step problems that require systematic thinking. To complete work quickly, some take shortcuts and miss out steps. As a result, errors occur and so progress over time is not as strong as it could be. Similarly, while phonics is taught well from the early years, more hesitant readers falter when they encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, because they do not make sense of their texts as they proceed. Teachers read with pupils regularly and encourage them to explore new vocabulary and figures of speech to improve their writing. With pupils now selecting topics to study, they are increasingly more eager to write. More reluctant writers, often boys who find writing a challenge, are responding well because the topics hold their interest. Pupils consider enthusiastically, for example, whether the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood' might be improved if the wolf was not a 'baddie'. They write about what the world might have been like when dinosaurs roamed the earth, the impact of destroying the world's forests or of plastics polluting the oceans. Hence, outcomes in writing are improving rapidly.

Pupils behave well and work hard because they enjoy learning. Parents are very positive about the school and say that their children are happy and feel safe here. Most send their children regularly, but a few pupils are absent too often and this slows their progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

You place pupils' care and safety as high priority. Safeguarding procedures are reviewed and revised regularly to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Safeguarding training for staff and governors is up to date. You check that all pre-employment checks are thorough and that all staff and visitors are cleared to work with pupils. Everyone understands their duty of care responsibilities. The procedures for first-aid training, risk

assessments, site security and supervision of pupils in all circumstances are robust. Staff know to follow the agreed procedures systematically and to act promptly if they have any concerns about a child. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe at all times in school and outside. They know not to socialise with strangers and understand how the internet, social media sites or 'chat rooms' pose dangers if, for example, they respond to 'pop-ups' that appear when using computers. They explained that some people 'try to get you to post personal information so that they can do bad things to you'. They know how to keep safe on the roads or in the case of fire and how to look after themselves generally.

Pupils are very kind and supportive of each other at all times. Older pupils look after younger ones with care, modelling their behaviours on how staff treat them. Pupils know that bullying can take many forms and to tell staff or parents if they are worried or upset. They explained that there is no bullying in school, because it is unkind and hurtful and that if it did happen teachers would deal with it immediately. Staff know that some pupils experience very difficult issues in their lives and support these pupils' emotional needs sensitively. You involve other agencies, where necessary, to support vulnerable pupils and their families to safeguard their well-being and welfare.

Inspection findings

- While pupils left the school at the end of Year 6 in 2018 above the standard expected for their age, there have been inconsistencies from year to year. The school's overall data for the results of tests and assessment in 2018 was positive, but progress over time was not as strong in reading and writing compared with mathematics. I examined whether all pupils currently are now making equally good progress in these subjects.
- Through looking at pupils' workbooks, observing them in lessons, talking to them about their learning and reviewing the school's assessment data, evidence shows that most pupils are making good progress throughout the school. On occasions, the level of challenge could be higher for a few pupils who are on the borderline of moving to the next level. Pupils write confidently and know to check their work for basic punctuation, spelling and grammar errors. Progress in mathematics is good, with teachers identifying quickly where individuals need help to tackle multi-step problems systematically. Pupils' progress in reading is more variable, particularly among less confident readers, who sometimes falter when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary or explaining what they have read. These pupils do not always make sense of their texts as they read to check for meaning. Leaders review each pupil's progress closely and identify those who need additional help to achieve well. Teachers and teaching assistants modify their plans to meet individual pupils' needs effectively.
- With some inconsistencies in the progress of boys and girls over time, and with boys outperforming girls at the end of Year 6 in 2018, I looked at how leaders pre-empt any potential variations from year to year. The school's assessment procedures are thorough. Leaders check teachers' assessments alongside work in pupils' books to verify consistency. They check that teachers' planning accommodates the needs of all pupils appropriately. With more of the curriculum becoming pupil-led, pupils choose topics they want to study and teachers make sure there is a fine balance to suit boys and girls over time. Both groups are making good progress from their starting points.
- The proportion of children attaining a good level of development (GLD) at the end of

their Reception year in 2018 was significantly lower than the national figure. GLD outcomes have fluctuated considerably over the last three years, so I examined the quality of provision in the early years currently. Children enter Nursery with skills typical for their age. They settle quickly, want to learn and enjoy success proudly. The new leader has made significant changes in the curriculum. There is now a particularly strong focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills to prepare children well for their learning in Year 1. Children enjoy a rich and stimulating environment where they explore and learn with confidence. Phonics is taught effectively. Number skills develop rapidly as children move from random counting and reciting of numbers to adding and taking away operations with accuracy. Staff know each child well and plan for individual needs effectively. Parents are extremely positive about how much their children enjoy school, with one saying, 'I can't believe how happy he is – he can't wait to get here.' Staff form trusting relationships with children and their parents and this benefits children immensely from the outset. Early years provision is good and children are making good progress. A good number are already working at a GLD this year.

- Finally, with pupils' attendance having been below the national average for some time, I looked at how leaders were addressing this. In 2017/2018, pupils' attendance improved to being close to the national average. Pupils are rewarded for good attendance and parents are encouraged to send their children to school every day. The low attendance of a few, particularly among the disadvantaged pupils, is still a concern as it impacts on the progress they can make over time. The number of persistent absences has fallen from 42 pupils last year to 26 so far this year. Leaders have made some inroads but are determined to continue their work with families to improve attendance further.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all pupils, but especially less confident readers, apply their early reading skills with greater confidence when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary and develop their comprehension skills further
- borderline learners, who are on the margins of working at the next level, attempt harder work with greater confidence, in order to challenge themselves further
- pupils, when solving multi-step problems that require more than one or two operations, are more confident in explaining the strategies that they apply in their work and why
- they do more to secure good attendance among all pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and all your staff, the chair of the governing body and five other governors. I reviewed documentation relating to pupils' achievement, the school development plan, safeguarding checks and policies and procedures. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness, and I examined the evidence therein. I met with middle leaders and other staff with specific responsibilities, and a representative from the local authority. Together with you, your deputy headteacher and other key leaders, I visited all classes and discussed these observations with all of you. I also observed pupils in the playground and around the school generally. I looked at pupils' books, spoke to several pupils about their work and listened to some reading. I spoke with a few parents at the start of the day to seek their views about the school. I also took into account the 42 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 32 free-text messages submitted by parents to Ofsted. I also considered the 31 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 22 responses pupils submitted to the online questionnaire for pupils.