

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



26 November 2018

Mrs Nichola Stewart
Headteacher
Suffield Park Infant and Nursery School, Cromer
Mill Road
Cromer
Norfolk
NR27 0AD

Dear Mrs Stewart

Short inspection of Suffield Park Infant and Nursery School, Cromer

Following my visit to the school on 14 November 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 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Your impressive and determined leadership, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has steered the school effectively through a period of considerable turbulence in staffing. You have built a strong and enthusiastic staff team who fully support the improvements you have made to teaching and learning. Consequently, standards have risen from 2017, attendance is average (the best it has been for the last two years) and all staff have very high expectations for what all groups of pupils can achieve. The new challenge curriculum in mathematics has had a huge impact on raising standards. For example, in 2018, 37% of pupils exceeded age-related expectations in mathematics, a substantial improvement from 2017 when only 9% of pupils achieved this high standard. One teacher said: 'We used to put the pupils in "boxes" based on what we thought they could do. They now do better and surprise themselves and push themselves; they are more resilient learners. Our pupils achieve much better because we believe they can, and they believe they can.' You are in the process of extending the challenge approach to all curriculum subjects. You have recognised that although there is effective teaching of phonics from when children start in the Nursery, there is not a clear rationale for the use of reading record books. Additionally, early reading books are not closely aligned to the stage of phonics that children are learning in class; older pupils are unclear where to record words that are new to them when reading on their own; some older pupils are selecting books that are beyond their current understanding even though they can read the words.

You and the staff have worked hard to address the issues from the previous inspection. The most able pupils are sufficiently challenged in lessons to achieve

their best. You have strengthened links with the Nursery thus ensuring that children are confident and ready to start their Reception year. Your self-evaluation is accurate and gives a clear and concise picture of the school. Areas for improvement you have identified are picked up in your school improvement and development plan. Staff know and understand the school's current priorities.

Pupils love coming to school. One pupil said: 'It's good coming to school 'cause you get to learn lots of stuff like science and a lot of maths.' Another pupil told me that she is learning about nouns, adjectives and verbs. When asked what an adjective is another pupil responded rapidly: 'Like lovely lady!' A Reception child told me: 'I like phonics learning because we get better at learning reading. I can read some words.'

All the parents I spoke to are enormously proud of the school and their children's achievements. One parent wrote me a letter to highlight how staff go out of their way to make families feel welcome: 'From the day I walked through the door of the school I could not have dreamt of the level of help and support that I received. It's been outstanding help and support from every member of staff, from the headteacher to the lollipop lady.' Nearly every parent echoed these sentiments in the text messages I received.

Governors have a strong understanding of the school due to their regular, sharply focused visits. They have given you and the staff effective support during the substantive building works last year. This has enabled you and staff to concentrate on raising standards and improving teaching and learning. Governors keep a careful check on the use of additional funds like the pupil premium grant and additional funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Safeguarding is effective.

- You and the governors have ensured that all safeguarding processes and procedures meet requirements. All staff understand and are confident in using safeguarding procedures. They find the weekly staff meeting focus on safeguarding issues helpful.
- You keep careful and detailed records of safeguarding concerns. You are tenacious in following up concerns with children's social care and keep staff updated following referrals.

Inspection findings

- I identified five lines of enquiry for this inspection.
- My first line of enquiry was about your actions to diminish the difference in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. Over the last year you and the staff have had a strong focus on this issue. You have targeted additional funds effectively to ensure that pupils receive the extra help needed to achieve their best. Consequently, in mathematics your new challenge curriculum has enabled pupils to achieve in line with other pupils nationally. In reading and writing disadvantaged pupils are rapidly catching up and achieved much better results in 2018 than in 2017. You are particularly proud that in

writing 55% of disadvantaged pupils achieved above age-related expectations, which is above the achievement of other pupils nationally. You were disappointed that disadvantaged pupils did not achieve better in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2018 but have accurately identified why this happened.

- My second line of enquiry was about the teaching of systematic, synthetic phonics. You carefully evaluated your approach to teaching phonics last year. Closer links with the nursery ensure that children start learning about sounds from the moment they start school. The phonics scheme you are now using is carefully structured and pupils are moved on in their learning as soon as they have mastered each stage.
- Pupils enjoy books and reading but beginning readers sometimes cannot sound out words because they have not learned the sound as it appears in the word in their phonics lessons. There is no agreed rationale for using reading record books. Parents usually write a comment but there is no guidance on what to write. Some classes include national curriculum expectations for reading, others do not. There does not appear to be consistent guidance for older, more fluent readers when they select books on their own. Consequently, pupils can read the words but do not always understand the story. The most able readers do not know where to record words that are new to them when they are reading. They are not sure whether they should write the word in their reading record book and ask an adult or look up the meaning in a dictionary.
- My third line of enquiry was about the progress of pupils with SEND. The school has a high proportion of pupils who have communication and interaction difficulties and you have ensured that all staff have been trained in how best to support these pupils. You have decided to use individual education plans for all pupils with SEND. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) gives strong support to teachers to help them to identify and then evaluate sharply focused learning targets. Consequently, all pupils with SEND make strong progress from their starting points.
- Pupils in the specialist resource base also make strong progress from their starting points. You ensure that these pupils have many opportunities to join other pupils for lessons. This strategy means that they are well prepared to return to their own schools or to move on to the next stage in their education. You have recently agreed to share the junior school SENCo. This has proved a highly effective move in securing even stronger transfer arrangements between the two schools.
- My fourth line of enquiry was about your actions to raise the attendance of all pupils. Your strong and effective strategies have resulted in a dramatic rise in attendance over the last year. Current attendance is in line with similar schools nationally. This is the best it has been for the last two years. Your robust action has not always been popular with parents. However, you have not relented in denying holidays in term time or in pursuing cases of persistent absence. You have rightly used all the powers available to you, in consultation with the local authority, to ensure that all pupils are in school, on time, every day. This action has undoubtedly contributed to improvements in all pupils' achievement. Your parent support adviser has given highly effective support to those families who need additional help in getting their children to school on time every day.

- My final line of enquiry was to check whether the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged and making the best possible progress. Pupils love the fact that they can choose the challenge they will work on in their mathematics lessons. Teachers carefully monitor pupils' choices, thus ensuring that they are not selecting activities that are too difficult or too easy for them. This process has been instrumental in raising teachers' expectations of pupils and pupils' expectations of themselves. Improvement in mathematics outcomes in 2018 indicates the positive impact of the challenge strategy. You are in the process of extending this approach to all curriculum subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is a clear rationale for, and consistent use of, reading record books across the school
- early reading books are matched to the stage of phonics pupils are learning in phonics lessons
- older readers know what to do when they come across a word that is new to them when they are reading on their own
- staff give consistent and clear guidance to most able readers on which books are a good match to their level of understanding as well as to their word reading ability.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Winyard
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with you, the deputy headteacher, the SENCo, the governors, the staff, a representative from the local authority pupils and parents. We observed learning and teaching of phonics in all classes. We observed a sample of pupils with SEND in the main school and specialist resource base. Pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 read to me. I scrutinised a range of documents including your self-evaluation and school improvement plan. I scrutinised pupils' writing in English and their mathematics work with you, the deputy headteacher and the mathematics leader. I scrutinised a range of safeguarding documentation and a sample of pupil files. I scrutinised 15 responses to Parent View, one letter from a parent, the online questionnaire for parents and 23 responses to the online staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the online pupil questionnaire.