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20 March 2017

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Dear Mrs Parker

Short inspection of Norton Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 March 2017 with Christine Cook HMI, 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As the school has continued to expand over the years, you have adapted well to the changes, further strengthening your senior leadership team with effective deputy headteachers who have specific lines of accountability across the school.

The school's improvement plans identify areas where you need to focus to further improve pupils' rates of progress and attainment. They are helping you to continue to raise standards across the school, particularly in phonics, in key stage 1 and in the early years. Standards by the end of key stage 1 are improving year on year, and in 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth in all subjects in key stage 1 was in line with national averages. However, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard remained below average. Standards in key stage 2 show that an above average proportion of pupils reach the expected standard and higher in reading, writing and mathematics.

You have strengthened your assessment procedures. This includes some formal testing of pupils and scrutiny of work in pupils' books. You, along with some specifically trained staff, use this to check and moderate the accuracy and reliability of the information collected, such as in writing. The quality of your assessment information is, therefore, successfully continuing to improve.

You have addressed the areas for improvement from the last inspection report. Most pupils now present their work neatly and take pride in their writing. Where presentation is not as strong, you are working to improve this with individual teachers.

At the last inspection, you were asked to further improve the quality of teaching. Staff recognise how hard the leadership team work to help them improve their teaching and to create a culture of success. Staffing is stable and teachers are happy in their work. One staff member summed up leaders' success in motivating staff by saying, 'It's a joy to wake up each morning and feel excited about the day ahead.' Staff feel valued because leaders are positive in their approach to school improvement, recognising strengths as well as areas for development. Leaders lead by example. The key stage 2 deputy headteacher ensures that she models good teaching practice in her own class and, therefore, sets a high standard. Teachers analyse and evaluate how well pupils learn in their own classes because leaders record and review video footage alongside them. As a result, teachers are clear about what they do well, and what practices need to be further refined.

On this inspection, I looked in detail at how effectively you are tackling the differences in performance between disadvantaged and other pupils in school. You carefully track pupils' individual performance so you can see whether they are making the accelerated progress required. When they are not, you quickly put interventions and support in place. Your current assessment information shows that differences between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils are reducing. Disadvantaged pupils across the school are doing well. More are on track to reach and exceed the expected standards than previously. However, because your focus is on tracking the progress of individual pupils, you, along with governors, do not have a strong strategic overview of any patterns and trends in the performance of different pupil groups over time. This requires further improvement.

Another area I focused on was the effectiveness of early years provision and key stage 1. You have strengthened the quality of teaching and tracking of phonics across both these key stages. More pupils are now on track to reach the expected standard than previously as a result. A systematic approach to teaching and careful grouping of pupils ensures that more pupils apply their knowledge earlier. Early years provision is strong. Teachers use a range of assessment information to gain a full picture of what young children know and can do. As a result, children in the early years make good progress and attainment when they start Year 1 is rising. Work seen in key stage 1 shows that you are continuing the upward trend of attainment for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Despite these improvements, leaders know that there is scope to increase the proportion of pupils making better than the expected rate of progress in the early years and key stage 1 even further.

The care, support and guidance you provide for all your pupils is a strong feature of the school. Leaders foster pupils' emotional development well. Pupils behave well and show positive attitudes to school. You engage parents well. The pupil premium helps to fund a family support worker who works with particular families, helping

them to understand the importance of regular attendance and encouraging them to be more involved in supporting learning at home. Parents appreciate how well you work with them. They report high levels of satisfaction with the work you do. They feel valued and involved in their children's education.

You check pupils' attendance daily. Rewards and incentives encourage pupils to attend regularly. However, current attendance is slightly lower than in previous years. This is largely due to a range of illnesses affecting the whole school.

Good support from the local authority has helped you to drive school improvement, such as to improve children's achievement in the early years and in phonics. It has worked with you to build on your strengths, using the school as a model of good practice for other schools. It has provided an external verification of your early years assessment information and agreed with your judgements.

Safeguarding is effective.

Your governors regularly ensure that all checks on newly appointed staff are fully in place. They ensure that the record on the suitability of staff to work with children is up to date. Well-documented work demonstrates that systems to safeguarding pupils are securely in place and follows the school's policies. You involve a range of outside agencies when required and are diligent in recording the information effectively. As a result, your pupils feel safe and know that teachers act quickly to keep them safe.

Inspection findings

- Pupils are involved in decision making through the school council. They report that there is no bullying in school and pupils behave well. Pupils enjoy school and find their learning interesting. Pupils know that on occasions when they fall out with each other, staff help them to sort it out quickly.
- Your subsidised breakfast club and school lunch provision provides all pupils with the opportunity to eat healthy meals through the day. You provide free milk and fruit across the school because you recognise the benefits this provides to learning and health. As a result, a high proportion of pupils enjoy a warm meal at lunchtime and have a healthy snack to sustain them through the morning.
- Phonics teaching has improved and is now more systematic. Leaders track the progress pupils are making across the school, providing extra support for pupils who need it. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and quickly pick up on misconceptions, helping pupils to apply their knowledge to both reading and writing.
- The leadership of special educational needs is strong. Records detail pupils' wide range of additional needs. The high number of younger pupils on the special educational needs register ensures that additional support is targeted effectively and needs are being met.
- Pupils' presentation of their work has improved. Pupils in Year 6 have well-developed handwriting skills, and younger pupils learn cursive script through their

spelling work. Books are well presented and neat. Leaders have identified that in particular classes, pupils' handwriting skills need more attention and are already addressing this. The work seen in writing and mathematics books shows that pupils are making good progress across all year groups.

- In the early years, teachers track the progress of children through a range of activities. They work with groups of children to develop specific skills and regularly observe how children use the extensive provision to extend learning. 'Learning journals' give a snapshot of children's learning over time. Children are happy and engaged because they receive high levels of care and support.
- Effective training has ensured that early years staff know how to develop children's speaking and listening skills. Children entering Nursery with lower than typical skills in these areas benefit from tailor-made programmes of support that are quickly put in place. As a result, children make good progress.
- Across the school in guided reading sessions, effective questioning allows pupils to demonstrate their comprehension skills. Leaders know that teachers are applying the strategies shared with them during staff training. Teachers are particularly effective in developing new vocabulary, facilitating peer work and encouraging pupils to share answers and learn from each other. Current assessment information shows that a much higher proportion of pupils are on track to reach expected outcomes, with more pupils already working at greater depth.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more pupils make better than expected progress across key stage 1 and in the early years so that at least an average proportion of pupils reach the expected standard in all subjects, including phonics
- their monitoring provides a more detailed analysis of the progress and attainment of different groups of pupils so that patterns and trends across different classes and year groups over time are identified.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Lunn
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I discussed aspects of the school's work with you, your deputy headteachers, the leader for special educational needs and the early years leader. I met with the chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. Both inspectors observed all lessons jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors spoke to parents and considered 70 parent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also considered the questionnaire responses from both pupils and staff. Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to a group of pupils about their work. We also looked at work in pupils' books. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including policies, the school's self-evaluation, development plans and other information relating to pupils' achievement and progress.