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Mrs Shewley Choudhury
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Choudhury

Short inspection of Snape Wood Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 13 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 June 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have ensured that the areas for improvement identified then have been successfully tackled. Your work to improve pupils' writing has been particularly effective. Pupils in Year 6 attained above-average results for their age in the national test for grammar, punctuation and spelling in 2017. The quality of writing in their books confirms that these improvements are being sustained by current pupils. In addition, standards at the end of early years, in phonics, and at the end of key stage 1 have risen steadily over the past three years.

Pupils work enthusiastically on activities that are generally well matched to their abilities. Teaching has improved in mathematics, with more emphasis on pupils solving problems and explaining the reasons for their answers. This work is still in its early stages, however. It has not yet become fully consistent throughout the school, especially in Year 1 and with the less able pupils.

Pupils and parents and carers speak warmly about the caring ethos of the school. Pupils say that they are very happy at the school. They describe it, with pride, as 'a very happy place,' where, 'you can learn good things'. During a discussion session, pupils talked about the interesting activities and topics they enjoy. Many say that they find science especially fascinating. Others recall, with pleasure, a thought-provoking topic about Maya civilisation. Visits to the National Space Centre and a country park stick in pupils' minds as pleasurable and enthralling events. Parents said that they value the information they receive and the approachability of you and

the other staff.

During 2016, the school went through a period of instability in leadership and governance. Following your appointment as headteacher in May 2017, you introduced positive changes to the school. As a result, staff and governors speak highly of your decisive leadership. They have confidence in your ability to bring further improvements. The recent review of governance highlighted several areas for improvement. Work has begun to tackle the issues raised, but it is not yet complete.

Working in close partnership with the newly appointed acting deputy headteacher, you have successfully dealt with previous issues with pupils' behaviour and attendance. In 2017, you established the school's nurture provision for pupils who struggle to cope in mainstream classes. This work has led to a big reduction in behaviour-related incidents, absences and exclusions. You describe the nurture provision as the 'beating heart' of the school, and the local authority describes the work as 'exemplary'. On several occasions during the inspection, I observed pupils in the nurture provision learning well and making steady progress from low starting points. This is because they receive effective teaching and pastoral support in this part of the school. No pupil attends this provision full time; rapid reintegration into their class is the aim.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leaders responsible for safeguarding have made sure that all arrangements are fit for purpose. Employment checks and procedures meet requirements.

Leaders, staff and governors work with a common purpose to ensure pupils' safety. The procedures for raising concerns are clear and well documented. Staff training in child protection is comprehensive and regular. Your records are detailed and accurately kept.

Your work to nurture and support vulnerable pupils is a real strength. This is achieved through the prompt response to concerns and the work of the nurture provision. The school's five values promote a positive, calm and supportive school ethos very well. Staff use these values, summed up as 'PRIDE – Positive, Respect, Inquisitive, Determination, Empathy', effectively to support pupils who have social, emotional and behaviour-related difficulties.

Pupils said that they feel safe in school. They are confident in adults' ability to deal with issues promptly and fairly. Pupils were adamant that they receive clear teaching about staying safe, bullying in all its forms and 'stranger danger' in lessons and assemblies.

Inspection findings

- In 2017, attainment in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 declined sharply and progress slowed for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. In key stage 1, standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 have remained below the national average for two years.
- Your current assessments show that, in all year groups apart from Year 1, pupils are now making faster progress in mathematics. This is a result of leaders' and teachers' renewed emphasis on the teaching of reasoning and problem solving.
- Observations of learning in mathematics in key stage 2 showed that a consistent approach to teaching and learning is being successfully applied. The majority of pupils work with sustained concentration because the work is well matched to their abilities. Pupils say that they enjoy the different levels of challenge available through the 'starter, main course, dessert' system. This means that time in lessons is used well to speed up pupils' learning.
- The work in pupils' mathematics books shows that the majority have made good progress from the start of the school year. In particular, the most able pupils respond well to the harder work that is set for them. Some of the less able pupils are not yet making the progress they need to in order to catch up quickly. This is because they are still struggling with basic concepts. Sometimes they lack the determination to stick at a task that challenges their thinking.
- You have taken effective action to reverse the previously high rates of pupils' absence, persistent absence and exclusion. Your attendance officer visits school daily and immediately follows up individual issues with absence. The acting deputy headteacher takes an effective lead on attendance. She precisely analyses trends and follows up issues with families and also with external agencies where needed. Absence requests are rarely authorised.
- Leaders and staff involve pupils effectively in improving their attendance through appropriate strategies to reward attendance and punctuality. As a result of these concerted efforts, current figures show that attendance has improved, for all groups of pupils, from the equivalent period in 2016. Likewise, the figure for persistent absence has reduced over the same period.
- Observations of pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school at playtimes and lunchtime did not reveal any concerns with their conduct. Pupils, staff and parents say that behaviour is improving. Pupils are aware that some pupils have 'problems', as they put it. They are sensitive to the needs of others, saying, 'we try to help'. As a result of your effective actions to improve pupils' behaviour, including the valuable support in the nurture provision, no further exclusions or behaviour-related incidents have been recorded to date.
- The governing body received an external review of its effectiveness in September 2017, following a period of instability. The review highlighted governors' inefficient decision making and their lack of challenge for school leaders. Governors were also asked to communicate more effectively with stakeholders, for example parents. The new chair of the governing body is aware that the work to tackle these shortcomings is in its early stages. Evidence from discussions with governors and from the minutes of meetings shows an increasing degree of

challenge for leaders. The recommended work to increase parental involvement and sharpen decision making has begun but is not complete.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they extend the recent work to improve teaching and learning in mathematics throughout the school, particularly to ensure that the less able pupils and pupils in Year 1 make faster progress and sustain higher attainment
- the governing body successfully completes its programme of improvement so that it is increasingly effective in holding leaders to account and in making key decisions efficiently, and more successful in communicating with parents and other stakeholders.

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

Yours sincerely

Christine Watkins
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and the acting deputy headteacher, the school business manager and the attendance officer. I also met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. I met with a representative of the local authority. I visited classes with you and the acting deputy headteacher, including the school's nurture provision and the nursery. I spoke with pupils informally, during lessons, breacktimes and lunchtimes. I also held a discussion with a group pf pupils in key stage 2. I examined pupils' work in their books and listened to them read. I considered the seven responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and I spoke informally with parents at the start of school. I considered a wide range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, minutes of meetings of the governing body, information relating to pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour, leaders' monitoring records, external reports about the school, the school's self-evaluation summary, and the school's improvement plan.