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26 June 2018

Mrs Samantha Ross
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Ross

Short inspection of Trimley St Martin Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 June 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 December 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since taking up your post in September 2016, you and your leadership team have clearly identified areas for school improvement. Your self-evaluation is accurate and links effectively to your school development plan. You have used lesson observations, work scrutinies and tracking data accurately to identify key priorities for your school. Although published data has been below the national average for the last two years for reading, writing and mathematics in key stages 1 and 2, it is clear that consistent approaches to teaching and learning, bolstered by new initiatives, are now having a positive impact on outcomes.

You, the governors and your leadership team have identified in your self-evaluation that improving outcomes for all pupils is a priority. During the inspection, we agreed that recent improvements have contributed to more pupils now achieving age-related expectations, particularly in reading and writing. You have identified that for this to continue it is important that teaching is consistently strong. In addition, we agreed that more pupils need to learn at greater depth, particularly in writing.

The school has a calm, well-ordered feel and this is reflected in the wonderful attitude pupils have towards their learning. Throughout the inspection, pupils were polite, well mannered and showed a real pride in their school. One pupil told me that: 'The school is great, as it offers a wide range of fun and helpful activities.'

Another informed me that: 'School helps us understand how the world works.' These were typical of other comments made by pupils. Pupils really enjoy coming to school: their survey responses were extremely positive.

Parents and carers speak fondly of the school. For example, one parent said: 'We are proud of the school, its teachers and pupils. We have no hesitation in recommending this school to others. Trimley St Martin has provided an excellent education.'

Governors play a significant role in ensuring that you and senior leaders are held accountable. They pay regular visits to the school, with a specific focus, to ensure that the momentum of improvement continues. They know the school well. The governor responsible for the allocation of pupil premium funding talked knowledgeably about how the funding is used and its impact. The safeguarding link governor has a thorough understanding of how to keep children safe and adds real strength to your safeguarding team.

Safeguarding is effective.

Throughout the day, I tested all aspects of the school to see how well pupils are looked after and whether the right protocols are giving any additional support that may be required. You have developed very strong systems that all staff are familiar with. Designated safeguarding leaders have all received the appropriate level of training and this has been shared with all staff. Where pupils do need additional external support, or access to specialist provision in school, you have created an effective 'nurture' provision which meets the needs of identified pupils effectively.

All safeguarding processes and procedures meet requirements. You keep detailed, well-organised files that indicate your good working relationships with other agencies and how any referrals are rigorously followed up.

High attendance is a strength of the school and this is reflected in the positive attitude pupils have towards school. Consequently, they want to attend every day.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was about how you ensure that pupils who were on track at the end of the early years continue to make good progress across key stage 1, particularly in reading and writing.
- Most children are now making strong progress in writing. Pupils are able to self-assess using your 'success criteria model'. We saw lots of good examples of pupils clearly writing at age-related expectations. However, this is not consistent across key stage 1. As a leadership team, you have clearly identified areas for development and are aware of what improvements need to be made.
- The pupils I heard read did so with great enthusiasm and applied a range of reading skills effectively. Most children were able to apply their phonics skills and tell me what they would do if they got 'stuck' on a word. However, the quality of teaching in phonics is inconsistent, so not all pupils receive the highest-quality

teaching.

- My second line of enquiry was about what leaders are doing to improve writing outcomes across key stage 2. During the inspection, we looked at a wide range of pupils' books and saw some very high-quality writing. In upper key stage 2 we saw examples of pupils using complex language and advanced literacy features to create wonderful writing across a range of genres. The development of your guided-reading strategy is having a direct impact on the pupils' use of vocabulary. The opportunities pupils now have to develop and expand their vocabulary through exposure to high-quality texts mean that pupils include more adventurous words in their writing.
- Effective curriculum planning has also created better opportunities for pupils to write with a purpose. For example, in Year 3, the pupils were using a 'Flat Stanley' text to link to their Egyptian topic, giving a real focus to their writing. Also, in Year 4, I saw the pupils sharing a non-fiction text about Hadrian's Wall, which linked to their Romans topic. The discussion the pupils had was very focused on how using others' opinions and ideas can be used to refine their own thinking. The quality of discussion, with a real purpose, then enabled the children to write with a broader understanding and, ultimately, better outcomes.
- Another of my key lines of enquiry was to look at the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Although the school only has a small number of pupils entitled to the pupil premium, it is clear that it is being used effectively to narrow the gap between disadvantaged pupils in the school and others nationally. The regular attainment and progress meetings you have introduced carefully track the progress of identified pupils and enable you, along with teachers, to evaluate the impact of any interventions taking place. The use of additional funding to support pupils with extra staffing and specific programmes is helping disadvantaged pupils to make strong progress. The success of many disadvantaged pupils is down to staff knowing the pupils extremely well and being able to support them emotionally.
- You have introduced a number of ideas that are having a positive influence on the pupils' approach to learning and also developing home/school links. Your 'Learning Gems' help to motivate pupils to be the best that they can be. This is not just a generic reward system but is actually specific to pupils' needs. For example, if you identify that a pupil lacks confidence, you tailor the 'Learning Gems' to that aspect of their development. This is having a profound impact on their personal development and also their attitudes towards learning. Your introduction of an online facility to share what pupils are doing at school with parents and carers has been greatly appreciated. One parent told me how she was working abroad, but was still able to see what her child had done in school, which she felt was 'fantastic'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the consistency and quality of teaching and learning across key stage 1 enables

all pupils to make strong progress, particularly in phonics

- more pupils learn at greater depth in all subjects, but particularly writing, through sharing best practice among staff and explicitly demonstrating to children what greater depth looks like.

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

Yours sincerely

David Milligan
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with you, the assistant headteacher, the governors, a representative from the local authority, designated safeguarding leads, and staff, pupils and parents. We observed teaching and learning in Reception and key stages 1 and 2. I read with pupils from Reception and Year 2. I looked at a range of documents, including your self-evaluation, school development plan and in-school assessment information. I scrutinised pupils' writing in English and other subjects in every year group with you. I visited pupils on the field and talked to your school council. I also looked at 49 responses from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 21 responses from the staff survey and 46 responses from the pupil survey. I held informal conversations with parents and carers on the school playground at the beginning of the day. I looked at a range of safeguarding documentation and a sample of pupil files.