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Mrs Sarah Bunce
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Bunce

Short inspection of Calton Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 April 2018 with Lizzy Meadows, Ofsted Inspector, 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 October 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Your determined and persistent leadership has seen the school successfully through a time of rapid expansion. You have provided new staff with thorough and effective induction as the school has grown. There is a strong feeling of teamwork among the staff. Pupils benefit from a vibrant learning environment. Pupils and staff are proud of their school.

The leadership structure has changed considerably since the previous inspection. You have a strong team of senior and middle leaders who are united in their goals to improve pupils' progress and achievement further. You have been successful in strengthening leadership systems to increase rigour and accountability. For example, you have tightened the way that leaders hold teachers to account for the impact of their teaching. You have also improved the way that pupils' progress is monitored and checked throughout the school.

You are accurate in your self-evaluation of the school's strengths and the fundamental aspects that require further work. In recent years, pupils' progress and attainment in key stage 2 have been too low. In 2017, there was some improvement in writing and mathematics. However, this was not replicated in reading. Pupils' progress in reading has been significantly below the national

average for the last three years. Disadvantaged pupils do considerably less well than other pupils nationally.

You are working on the right aspects for improvement this year. Improving the teaching of reading sits at the core of these plans. Leaders at all levels are working proactively and are securing improvement effectively this year. For example, leaders' actions to remedy weaknesses in the teaching of comprehension skills are increasingly successful.

In their conversations with an inspector, parents and carers were united in their praise for the school. They recognised the improvements that you have made in home-school partnerships. A very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, reported that they would recommend the school to another parent.

Pupils enjoy school and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They show respect to their classmates. Previously high rates of exclusion are reducing. Most pupils attend well. Rates of attendance overall are in line with those seen nationally. Leaders have strengthened the systems to check pupils' attendance. However, some pupils who are disadvantaged do not yet attend school frequently enough.

At the previous inspection you were asked to accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the standards that are expected for their age in mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 has risen. It is now broadly in line with the national average. However, a smaller proportion of disadvantaged pupils reach the standards that are expected than in schools nationally. The whole-school strategy to develop pupils' reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics is proving successful. Consequently, current pupils are making better progress in mathematics this year.

You were asked to implement a structured programme to develop pupils' use of grammar. This work is in progress. Explicit teaching of grammar routinely takes place as part of the curriculum. This teaching is helping to diminish the differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils.

As a result of continuing training, the governing body has strengthened the way it works. Governors now challenge the school's leaders regularly to check the impact of the school's work. You and your staff keep governors fully apprised of how you are remedying previous weaknesses in teaching.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Leaders responsible for safeguarding and the school's inclusion team work relentlessly to ensure that all is being done to minimise pupils' risk of harm. New staff receive a thorough induction when they start to work at the school. Staff are confident in how to use and apply the school's safeguarding procedures. All staff training is up to date and in line with legislation.

Checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are fit for purpose and meet requirements. Leaders work closely with external agencies. Their referrals are timely. They ensure that safeguarding records are kept precisely and meticulously. Pupils feel safe and know what to do if they have any concerns. They know how to keep safe on the internet and when using mobile phones.

Inspection findings

- The first line of enquiry focused on the impact of leaders' actions to improve the teaching of reading. As a staff team you have improved the culture of reading throughout the school this year. Pupils have positive attitudes when reading. The promotion of reading in classrooms and around the school is strong and clear. Pupils in key stage 2 now read aloud with confidence in lessons and pupils are respectful of one another at these times. Home-school reading partnerships have improved markedly the frequency of reading. Teachers ensure pupils' reading books match closely to their reading ability. The vast majority of pupils fulfil the school's expectations of reading at home and value the incentives available to read widely and often.
- Leaders' recent actions to improve pupils' understanding of what they read are making a difference. You have made bold changes to the way your staff teach reading this year. Staff training is improving teachers' subject knowledge. Regular professional discussions about pupils' progress are ensuring that the teaching of reading is increasingly meeting pupils' needs well. As a result, more pupils of average attainment and the most able demonstrate the reading skills and knowledge expected for their age. However, you recognise that weaknesses in the quality of teaching remain in some classes. Hence, some boys as well as disadvantaged pupils, and those who have previously low attainment, do not make enough progress over time. Consequently, too few of these pupils have the reading skills and knowledge expected for their age. Leaders' actions to improve the reading curriculum are starting to work. However, more time is needed to establish this aspect of the school's work fully so that recent improvements are sustained.
- Another line of enquiry looked at the quality of phonics teaching. In 2017, the proportion of pupils meeting the standards required in the phonics screening check improved to be broadly in line with the national average. However, the proportion of some groups of pupils meeting the required standard has been too low over recent years.
- Phonics teaching is regular and systematic. Leaders assess pupils' skills in phonics and use this information to identify pupils' gaps in understanding. However, the quality of phonics teaching for current pupils is too inconsistent from class to class. It is not yet enabling some middle- and low-attaining pupils in key stage 1 to keep up or catch up with the standards expected nationally. Pupils do not receive teaching of each aspect of the Year 1 phonics curriculum quickly enough. Therefore, time to practise and secure these skills is too limited. This restricts the progress that these pupils make. As a result, too many pupils in

key stage 1 have gaps in their knowledge and use of phonics. This hinders their ability to read and spell accurately.

- Another aspect inspectors looked at was how well leaders ensure that spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught so that pupils' progress in writing is consistently strong. Pupils' progress and achievement in writing improved markedly in 2017 to above the national average in key stage 2. However, the proportion of pupils who met the standards expected for their age dipped at key stage 1, particularly disadvantaged pupils, who did less well than other pupils.
- Subject and phase leaders track pupils' progress in writing precisely. They give teachers regular support and feedback about their teaching. Leaders' whole-school strategy to improve pupils' writing is paying off. Teachers' assessments are accurate. The overt teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar, now in place across key stage 2, is making a difference. Increasingly, pupils in key stage 2 use varied punctuation and powerful vocabulary to add interest and detail to their writing.
- Currently the existing differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school are diminishing. However, leaders recognise the need to increase standards in writing for boys, disadvantaged pupils and those with low attainment, across the school, so that more of these pupils write with the accuracy and depth expected for their age.
- Weaknesses in pupils' spelling remain in some classes further down the school. Pupils do not use and apply their phonics skills consistently well to spell accurately. Pupils' capacity to write at length is improving gradually. However, weaknesses in spelling prevent some pupils from writing with the accuracy and complexity expected for their age. This is particularly the case among pupils whose attainment was previously average or low and those who are disadvantaged.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they sustain recent improvements to the teaching of reading to rapidly develop the reading skills and knowledge of all groups of pupils
- pupils routinely use and apply their phonics skills when writing so that their spelling is accurate
- the teaching of phonics enables key stage 1 pupils to practise, use and apply their phonics skills sufficiently so that those who have previously underachieved catch up quickly and read well
- the teaching of writing enables low-attaining pupils, boys and those who are disadvantaged to catch up so that a greater proportion of pupils write with the complexity and accuracy expected for their age.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Carrington
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors spoke with you and your deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, phase and subject leaders and three governors. An inspector also met with a representative from Gloucestershire local authority. We made visits to lessons to observe pupils' learning and to scrutinise their work. An inspector conducted a scrutiny of pupils' writing in their books jointly with you and the deputy headteacher. An inspector talked to pupils to hear about their views of the school and hear them read. We considered a range of documentary evidence, including: development plans; external reports of the school's effectiveness; school performance information; monitoring records for teaching, learning and assessment; analysis of pupils' attendance and behaviour; and safeguarding documentation. In addition, I took account of 37 responses to the Parent View online survey and the free-text messaging service. An inspector talked to parents at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors also gathered the views of staff through discussions during the inspection and reviewed the online staff survey.