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Dear Mrs Stanton

Short inspection of Caldecote Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 September 2016, 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 September 2011.

This school continues to be good.

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

You and all staff have created a compelling sense of care and nurture for the whole school community. The high expectations you have set ensure that there is an uncompromising focus on achieving the very best for your pupils. You quite rightly do not shy away from dealing with issues and any underperformance is challenged determinedly. This has ensured that all staff are very clear about what is expected of them in order to secure good outcomes for all pupils.

Both you and the substantive deputy headteacher are currently in co-headship roles to support a neighbouring school. This is initially for the autumn term; however, it may be extended for the remainder of this academic year. You are using this opportunity to further develop the leadership in this school by asking middle leaders to step up to more senior roles. They are positively rising to this challenge.

Results have improved year on year, over time. In 2015, children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 attained in line with the national averages in all areas. In key stage 2, outcomes were above national levels for reading, writing and mathematics. In 2015, there was also an increase in the number of most-able pupils who did better than is expected nationally. Following the 2015 outcomes, you were mindful that standards in both early years and key stage 1 could be improved

further. The unvalidated 2016 results show that in the early years, Year 1 phonics and key stage 1, children and pupils have achieved well.

You and your deputy headteacher both have the full support of your staff at all levels. They work hard to be involved in all aspects of the school and are committed to what they do. For example, support staff are integral to the curriculum teams and help teachers lead curriculum subject areas. One staff member told me that they 'feel very proud' to work at the school. They like being a part of it because 'the most important thing is that the children are happy and enjoy what they are doing; this helps them to learn better.' Through your encouragement, support and approachability, staff feel inspired to do their very best for all pupils.

Since the previous inspection, the curriculum has developed considerably. You have responded well to the recent national changes and have created a curriculum that is unique to the school and responds to the needs of pupils' personal interests and experiences well. You have done this through careful thought and planning about what the pupils at Caldecote enjoy and are interested in.

You and the staff are very well supported by the governing body. Governors convey an ethos of proactivity in all that they do. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the school and constantly have pupils at the centre of their work. As a result of this, governors are successful in holding leaders to account to secure good provision for all pupils, ensuring that they are ready for their next steps, moving to their secondary education.

In the early years, the children settle in very quickly. Leaders work with the on-site pre-school effectively so that routines and clear expectations are established from the outset. This ensures that children feel safe and secure and are keen and eager to start to learn. Adults plan for children's transition from the early years very carefully. They consider children's different starting points and, as a result, children are well supported as they move into key stage 1. The curriculum in Year 1 at this early stage in the academic year is a balance of what the children experience in the early years, together with the addition of more formal approaches to classroom learning. The pupils showed that they were ready for this by demonstrating good language skills, confidence and independence in their work. For example, two boys were able to explain what they were learning about space, having retained facts from their previous work. They explained that 'you have to wear a life suit when you visit space because you cannot breathe in space air,' and 'shooting stars are like comets and the world is made of granite.' When asked how they knew these facts, they said they 'want to be astronauts and explore Mars, so we need to remember everything we learned last week.'

Older pupils were very eager to talk to me and tell me about their 'kind and terrific' teachers. Pupils described their school as 'fantastic', 'encouraging' and 'interactive'. They elaborated further by saying, 'all grown-ups help us. We can try everything and it does not matter if we do not get it right. We have a go at all sorts of things and when we are stuck we get help and when we find it easy, we are helped to think about how to do even better.' Pupils also spoke with pride about the money

that they raise to support various charities such as WaterAid and, more recently, for people with dementia. Other pupils told me about the wide range of clubs and activities the school provides. Pupils enjoy taking part in their weekly singing sessions with a specialist teacher for music and they feel that this joins together everyone from different classes. They also talked about the responsibilities they have in school, for example, being voted in as a member of the school council, being a part of the eco group or being a 'buddy' to the younger children, so that 'their playtimes are safe and fun.'

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that the safeguarding arrangements are up to date and fit for purpose, reflecting the needs of the school. Staff have a good awareness of the indicators of abuse or neglect and procedures to follow should they be concerned about a pupil's safety and welfare. All staff and governors have completed safeguarding training, including training in the 'Prevent' duty. As a result, they talk with knowledge and awareness about issues that are pertinent to keeping pupils safe locally and in the wider world. The designated lead staff also have responsibility for recruitment and safeguarding. They regularly complete training at the appropriate level and this includes wider aspects, such as equality and diversity. The school site is safe and secure. This is overseen by governors who routinely join leaders for a health and safety walk around the site. The identity of visitors is closely checked. The rigour in these processes such as, for example, your frequent self-audits to ensure that no process or action is left unchecked, ensures that children are kept free from harm and any risk is minimised.

Pupils that I met during the inspection, both in meetings and while visiting the classrooms, were unanimous in their view that they were very happy at school. They said that they felt safe because the adults care about them and look after them well. They are aware of the different forms of bullying and the upset that it can cause. They told me insistently that bullying is rare, but if there are any problems between pupils that cannot be sorted out between them, staff soon deal with them in a fair way. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe when they use technology. This is because the curriculum for all pupils includes an emphasis on staying safe when on the internet.

Inspection findings

- You lead with assertive confidence and have an accurate, perceptive insight into how the school will improve. You and your interim co-headteacher are providing strong and effective leadership. Self-evaluation is mostly accurate and realistic. You both have a clear understanding of what your school does well and what it needs to do to improve further. The areas you have identified to focus on during this academic year have been confirmed during my inspection.

- You routinely monitor the quality of teaching. There is a very thorough programme in place that ensures that you and other leaders are constantly checking that the quality of teaching is improving. As a result of improved teaching, pupils are making good progress and this is being sustained. All staff are held to account, including support staff. Their ongoing professional development is supported through an effective, precise performance management system.
- The information you gather about pupils is detailed and comprehensive. You have created an approach to collecting assessment information that is manageable for you and your staff. This has resulted in all leaders, teachers and governors using it effectively to identify which pupils or groups are making progress and which need some additional support or challenge. The system has been effective in encouraging teachers in lessons to focus on the skills and attributes that pupils have and need to gain. Your regular checks and meetings ensure that all staff feel responsible for each pupil's learning and gives them an opportunity to reflect on how they could further change their teaching to meet all their pupils' needs.
- Pupils read to me, either from their reading books or their exercise books, with confident fluency. Pupils make good use of their phonics knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words and were able to consider the punctuation when showing expression in their reading. They talk with self-assurance about the type of books they like and their preferred authors. The new library is an addition to the school and pupils talk about how they are excited to see the selection of books that they now have.
- Pupils told me that learning is fun at Caldecote because they are allowed to explore, investigate and find things out for themselves. Pupils are interested in what they do and this is reflected in their attitude and commitment to tasks and the homework they complete.
- Curriculum teams lead subject areas, other than English and mathematics, with teachers taking lead roles. These are well established and the teams' work ensures that an exciting curriculum is carefully thought through, planned and delivered. However, you agree that the assessment of some curriculum subjects, although started and considered, is not yet implemented fully.
- Despite having very few numbers of disadvantaged pupils, you and the governors are prudent about how the additional funding from the government is spent on this group of pupils. Your class profiles form a base for a discussion between leaders and teachers that ensure that staff are very precise about the provision for the disadvantaged pupils. The progress and attainment of the few disadvantaged pupils show a positive picture, with their progress having improved year on year, in particular, for the most able disadvantaged pupils. You are very resolute about specific targets for these pupils and communicate that it is 'not just okay' for them to simply meet their targets. The expectation is that they will exceed them and measures are put in place to ensure that this happens. As a result of this, the most able disadvantaged pupils do well from their starting points on entry to the school.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. This is because you and the staff are aspirational for them to be successful. You check where pupils are in their work, and monitor it closely over short periods of time. This ensures that teaching is effective, interventions are timely, and that close working relationships with outside agencies are making a difference to the progress pupils make. As a result, these pupils are equipped with vital skills that they use effectively in their day-to-day work.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are strong in school. Conduct around the school building and in class is of a very high standard. Pupils are polite, kind and thoughtful to each other.
- Attendance is consistently above the national average. The systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality are effective. You have communicated very clearly to parents about the importance of pupils being in school every day. Persistent absence is rare because of your high expectations and the importance you place on pupils being in school. Where families require support, you are firm but understanding and agree your actions with appropriate sensitivity.
- The website is a valuable resource for parents and contains lots of useful information to help them support their child in school and keep them informed about what is happening. The website meets current requirements. You and the governors recognise the importance of checking it regularly to ensure that it remains so.
- The majority of parents and carers are incredibly positive about their children's experiences in the school, and the school offers parents many opportunities to come into school. There are, however, a few who do not feel that the school communicates as effectively as it could.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the achievement of pupils in all subject areas is monitored and assessed as well as it is in English and mathematics so that pupils' progress in all areas of the curriculum is checked carefully
- they find some alternative strategies to further strengthen the positive partnerships with parents.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracy Fielding
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the interim co-headteacher/substantive deputy headteacher and members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. I also had informal discussions with a group of parents and pupils to seek their views of the school. I spoke to staff about safeguarding and their roles in the school. I also met with the external adviser and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I visited all the classrooms as part of my tour of the school, accompanied by you. Examples of pupils' work from the last academic year and this year were looked at and I listened to pupils read individually and while in lessons. I observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and as they moved around the school. A number of documents were reviewed, including the single central record, the school's self-evaluation and records relating to the monitoring of teaching and learning. I also took account of the responses to the online Ofsted questionnaires completed by 173 parents, plus 31 text messages from parents and two members of staff. The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.