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Miss Nathalie Watson
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Dear Miss Watson

Short inspection of St Anne Line Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 22 November 2017, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

Your leadership is passionate and effective. At the time of the previous inspection you were the joint headteacher alongside the long serving predecessor headteacher. The only area for improvement at the previous inspection was to increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding. There have been staff changes since then. Your assessment of teaching is based on a wide range of evidence. Using this assessment, you help teachers to improve their practice.

You have been in sole charge for two years, supported by the deputy headteacher who joined the school when you took over. The two of you form what teachers describe as 'the ideal pair' as your skills complement one another. You have a clear vision for excellence in the school and leaders are working towards this goal.

Current teachers share your vision. They are ambitious for the school and its pupils. Teachers value the efforts made to reduce unnecessary workload, and leaders' concern for their well-being, for example saying, 'This is a tremendous school to work at.'

Some parents express concern about the school and the changes you have made. However, I investigated their criticisms and found their perceptions to be at odds with the reality in the school.

It is apparent that you, school leaders and governors, know the school's strengths and areas for further improvement very well and that leaders are relentless in improving already good provision. According to pupils, the best thing about the school is 'the teachers'. Working relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent.

Pupils' highly positive ethos and behaviour reported at the previous inspection has been maintained. Pupils get on well together and are kind to one another. The assembly and hymn practice I attended made a very happy start to the day. The quality of singing was impressive and pupils were taught to sing with musicality, building up singing skills in canon and harmony. There was also great promotion of values through the lyrics. It was a real community event for pupils and staff.

Safeguarding is effective.

Procedures for keeping pupils safe are robust. You and other leaders ensure that all safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose. Pupils have a safe environment in which to learn. Your staff and the safeguarding governor are robust in their approach and diligent in keeping records and following procedures to ensure that the safety of pupils is maintained. Pupils told me that they feel very safe in school and governors pointed to improvements in safeguarding arrangements such as the introduction of closed circuit television cameras.

Pupil anti-bullying ambassadors have been trained, but have nothing to do as they report that there is no bullying now and everyone gets on well. Your school's work with external agencies has received praise from those partners. Files are immaculate, but most importantly all staff are highly vigilant and maintain a caring culture where safeguarding is at the heart of the school.

I really enjoyed my visit to the beehive nurture base where vulnerable children receive special care and support, enabling them to develop social skills as well as academic progress.

Inspection findings

- I pursued a number of lines of enquiry to ascertain whether the school remained good. My first question was 'Why is pupils' progress in writing so strong?' Not only is it better than in reading or mathematics, but in the summer 2017 national tests, pupils' progress and attainment in writing were well above average. The strength in writing has been present for several years. Writing is developed through a wide range of different subjects and expectations of writing are high across the curriculum. Pupils thrive as their aspirations are lifted and their imagination is set free through writing. Some of this good practice has been transferred to other subjects.
- My second line of enquiry explored whether the improvements in the key stage 2 national tests between 2016 and 2017 are sustainable. There was particular improvement in reading. Leaders were shocked by the 2016 dip in performance.

They carefully analysed why pupils had done badly and realised that while pupils could read by decoding, they lacked the skills and experience to understand meaning. Consequently, leaders have adopted a similar approach to that which has already proven successful for writing. They have also placed a greater emphasis on understanding the books they are reading and encouraging reading at home. A new library has been opened. Mathematics progress continues to lag behind that for writing and reading. Leaders have been working with external advisers to improve mathematics provision. Pupils are good at arithmetic but are less skilful in reasoning. The school has introduced more opportunities to practise this skill. The school's assessment information on current pupils suggests that there is continuing improvement in mathematics and reading.

- My third line of enquiry concerned the curriculum offered by the school. Since the previous inspection, the school has worked hard to combine additional demands in English and mathematics with maintaining a broad and balanced curriculum. The school has adopted a curriculum model that covers a range of subjects to inspire pupils. For example, this term, Year 6 pupils have been inspired in history, geography and science, through learning about ancient Egypt, the Second World War and the voyages of Charles Darwin. In addition, pupils are learning in a range of subjects including French, physical education and music. Connections are made across the curriculum, with curriculum overviews for each year group. There are lots of opportunities for pupils to participate in out-of-lesson clubs for sport, music, film, and cooking. The autumn term fair and the summer term enterprise units provide opportunities for pupils to learn some basic economic and business ideas. Fundraising for charities raises pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Finally, I wanted to check whether the school is doing all that it can to ensure that pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, attend regularly. Since the previous inspection there has been a greater focus on attendance. Attendance has improved compared with the same time last year. There are very specific and understandable reasons for some of the persistent absence, but some is down to unauthorised holidays. The school challenges this, sometimes using fines. Pupils' desire to be in school has been raised through incentives. Punctuality has risen sharply and pupils arrive on time ready to learn.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is more consistency in pupils' progress between subjects
- they monitor the impact of new initiatives to check they are having the desired impact.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Brentwood, the regional schools commissioner and the director of

children's services for Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher, teachers, members of the governing body, a representative of the Basildon Education Partnership and a group of pupils. Together with the head boy and head girl we visited each class to observe teaching. I looked at pupils' books, I observed pupils around the school, in the playground, in assembly and in the beehive nurture room. I reviewed school documents about self-evaluation, development planning and safeguarding, including the single central record. I also considered the 17 responses to Parent View and 26 responses from staff.