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Mr Derk Van Den Broek
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Van Den Broek

Short inspection of King's Stanley CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 October 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. You lead a dedicated staff team that is determined to provide a broad, exciting curriculum for pupils. Parents describe the school as 'a fantastic happy place' where pupils are 'supported, strengthened and stretched'. You are ably assisted by the deputy headteacher, who leads many of the school's effective teaching and learning initiatives.

You work closely with parents and address any concerns that they may have. Parents who spoke with me during the inspection, and those who responded online, noted how teachers and support staff had met their children's needs. One parent stated, 'The teachers and other adults at this school believe in my child and it clearly shows.'

Pupils have numerous opportunities to share their views and concerns and this helps them to feel valued. Pupils told me how they are able to discuss aspects of school life at lunchtime 'mindfulness club'.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to make sure that teachers provided high levels of challenge for the most able pupils and improve the physical development of children in the early years. These formed two lines of enquiry for this inspection and are discussed later in this report. You were also asked to ensure that teachers provide good quality investigations in mathematics to deepen pupils' knowledge and encourage pupils to use subject-specific language across the broader curriculum.

You have provided high-quality resources and training for teachers in mathematics. This has led to pupils engaging in practical and theoretical problem-solving activities that can be seen in workbooks and on the school's website. Current assessments show that this improved provision is raising standards in mathematics. However, you agree that middle-attaining pupils do not make sufficient progress to reach the higher standard in this subject.

You have ensured that the school website gives pupils and parents specific details of all of the subjects being studied and this includes the use of subject-specific language. However, our joint scrutiny of topic books showed that pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to use their writing skills when writing in subjects other than English. You agree that addressing this is a priority for the school.

Governors have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They provide the right balance of support and challenge. A good example of this is the recent incisive assessment of the impact of new teaching strategies in mathematics. Governors pose appropriate questions to school leaders. They carry out regular monitoring visits to gain first-hand experience of the quality of provision throughout the school. During these visits, governors talk with pupils about their experiences of learning. They feed pupils' views back to you and to the other governors. This level of scrutiny and challenge is supporting the school's work to continue to improve.

Safeguarding is effective.

All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Training for all staff is up to date, and you make sure that records are well maintained. Appropriate checks are made of staff before they start employment. Governors promote a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. They carry out regular checks to make sure that staff follow safe procedures. Parents told me that their children are safe and that leaders and teachers listen to them if they have any concerns and act positively to find solutions.

Pupils know how to stay safe in school, in the community and when online. Pupils said that bullying was very rare and were confident that staff would act decisively to solve any issues. You have taught the pupils what to do if the school had to react quickly to a dangerous incident.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed the particular aspects of the school's work on which the inspection would focus.
- The first line of enquiry considered how effectively leaders ensure that middle-attaining pupils in key stage 2 are challenged to reach the higher standards in mathematics. Pupils' progress in mathematics has declined at key stage 2 in recent years from above the national average in 2016 to below in 2018. You recognised that none of the middle-attaining pupils achieved the higher standard

in 2017. This improved in 2018, when 13% of middle-attaining pupils and 36% of the most able pupils achieved the higher standard.

- Leaders have introduced a different approach to teaching and learning in mathematics since the start of the current academic year. Teachers in all classes make sure that pupils start their mathematics tasks at an appropriately challenging level. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were able to complete mathematical calculations where there was more than one mathematical operator, including brackets, division and indices.
- During our scrutiny of pupils' workbooks and our visits to classrooms, we found examples of pupils working at the higher standards in mathematics. There is evidence to show that the new approach to teaching and learning is providing greater challenge. However, you agree that middle-attaining pupils are not making sufficient progress to reach the higher standards.
- The next line of enquiry assessed how leaders ensure that boys in key stage 2 are supported to make at least good progress in writing. Progress in writing has been average overall during the last three years. However, in 2016 and 2017 boys made significantly weaker progress than girls in key stage 2.
- Writing standards are rising across key stage 2 for boys and girls. Teachers are effectively encouraging pupils to write at greater depth. During the inspection, Year 5 pupils were writing introductory adverbial phrases and adding personification. One boy suggested, 'As I walked through the dense, melancholy mist...' He went on to describe how the mist 'felt' sad and gloomy and it made him feel the same. We assessed the quality of writing in English books and in subjects across the curriculum. Boys and girls are making similarly strong progress from their various starting points. Pupils take less care with the quality of their writing in subjects other than English. You agree that pupils need to be given much more experience of using a variety of writing skills in their work across the curriculum.
- The third line of enquiry assessed how effectively leaders have checked that teachers are providing appropriately high levels of challenge to the most able pupils across the school. This was a recommendation from the previous inspection.
- There is clear evidence to show that the most able pupils are appropriately challenged throughout the school and across the curriculum. School displays and the website showcase examples of high-quality outcomes from the most able pupils. Current assessments of pupils' progress in subjects show that the most able pupils are making good progress.
- The final line of enquiry investigated what action leaders have taken to improve the experiences of children in the early years by offering interesting and challenging experiences in the outside area and to improve children's physical development. This was also a recommendation from the previous inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have made significant improvements to the outside learning environment. This offers children numerous experiences that help them to develop their physical skills. As a result, children's physical development is good. During the inspection, children were using fine motor skills to build towers and other structures. They were also learning to balance on two-wheel vehicles

and digging eagerly in the extensive sand areas. Teachers share examples of children's physical development with parents through the school's website and via an online learning diary. Parents provide additional information about their children's activities out of school. This helps to create a more detailed assessment of each child's physical development.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils at key stages 1 and 2 write more effectively in subjects across the curriculum
- a higher proportion of middle-attaining pupils reach the higher standard in mathematics at key stage 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Hodson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, various school leaders, the chair of the governing body and other governors. I had telephone conversations with the local authority adviser for schools. We visited classrooms to assess the progress being made by pupils. I looked at pupils' workbooks and talked with pupils in classes and at a separate meeting. We considered the progress being made by current pupils.

We looked at a range of documentary evidence including the school's evaluation of its own performance and plans for improvement. I looked at various documents related to safeguarding, including the single central record and governors' reports. We also assessed current rates of attendance for groups of pupils. I gathered views from parents at the school gate and took account of 130 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. I reviewed several free-text responses from parents. There were no responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires.