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Mr Peter Boulton
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Boulton

Short inspection of Robin Hood Primary School

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

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school's experienced senior leaders demonstrate a shared ambition for improvement. Middle leaders are increasingly effective in their areas of responsibility, although these roles are not yet fully developed. You have identified the strengths of the school, and those areas that are priorities for school improvement following the dip in pupils' outcomes in 2016. Strategies that have been introduced led to improved outcomes in 2017, but you recognise that pupils' progress is broadly average and attainment of Year 6 pupils remains at or below the national averages.

Governors are well informed about the school and understand the priorities for improvement, such as raising pupils' attainment and progress in writing and mathematics at key stage 2. They provide an effective level of support and challenge to you and the school. For example, they regularly meet with middle leaders. The governors recognise the importance of safeguarding and are proud of how well the school knows the families of the children. The local authority school improvement partner provides targeted support for the school, and is complimentary about the school's collaborative work with other schools in the borough.

The previous inspection report identified areas for development that included teachers' questioning to deepen the most-able pupils' understanding of what they are learning. The school has addressed this. During lesson observations we saw questioning being used effectively to promote responses that were confident and well thought out.

Pupils are engaged in their learning and they are well supported by the adults in school. They are pleased with the range of clubs and outdoor learning activities that the school provides. Parents, staff and pupils all hold positive views about the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Effective systems and policies are in place to safeguard pupils. Reporting and referral systems are understood by staff. Pupils say that they feel safe in school, and they know that adults will listen to them and take the appropriate action if they have concerns. They say that there are a few bullying incidents, and that staff deal with them quickly and effectively.

The school undertakes the appropriate checks on the suitability of staff to work in the school. Staff have completed the training necessary for them to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. Senior leaders and the chair of the governing body have undertaken safer recruitment training.

Inspection findings

- In 2017, pupils' progress in writing by the end of key stage 2 showed some improvement, but their attainment remained below average. As a consequence, writing was identified as a school priority. As our first line of enquiry, we agreed to evaluate the impact of the strategies that leaders have implemented to improve pupils' writing.
- The training provided on the teaching of writing has led to improved practice. Teachers have developed tasks that promote pupils' use of correct sentence structure. Expectations have been raised of the standards of pupils' spelling and punctuation, and of their handwriting. The school encourages pupils to practise their spelling with online resources that can be used at home. Support for pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, takes the form of 'booster classes' and targeted interventions. Middle leaders are beginning to analyse assessment information more carefully to inform and evaluate the strategies being employed; however, this remains at an early stage.
- The writing seen in pupils' books showed improvement in several respects. Correct grammar, punctuation and spelling are more evident, and older pupils are producing pieces of writing that demonstrate their creativity. In the classes we observed, pupils were engaged in their writing tasks and were able to explain how they could further improve their work, for example by using a wider vocabulary. Pupils in Year 3 wrote with increasing confidence using cursive script. Even so, leaders recognise that more needs to be done for there to be continued and sustained progress in writing across the school.
- As was the case with writing, pupils' progress in mathematics at key stage 2 improved in 2017, but their attainment remained below average. Leaders have identified the need to further raise progress and attainment in mathematics at key

stage 2. We agreed that the second key line of enquiry would focus on the effectiveness of the actions they have taken.

- The teaching of mathematics has been reorganised to focus on the needs and abilities of individuals and groups of pupils. A range of resources has been provided to help both pupils and teachers. Intervention classes have been introduced, taught by staff and senior leaders several times each week. The small size of the groups gives teachers greater opportunities to target their support. These classes focus on number, calculation and place value, with the aim of ensuring that pupils are secure in their understanding of these important areas. Other areas of mathematics are taught in whole-class lessons. Special arrangements have been made for Year 6, with pupils taught for some of the time in two classes so that teachers can target support for pupils more effectively.
- Inspection evidence showed the positive impact of these strategies. In lessons, pupils understood how to solve problems correctly using the methods teachers had modelled. Teachers provided appropriate support and challenge through a range of activities. Pupils confidently explained their reasoning behind their answers. The most able pupils showed they could attempt and complete problems that required a greater depth of thinking. The work in pupils' books also showed that improved progress is being made, particularly with their ability to perform calculations effectively.
- Over the past three years, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has fallen, and in 2017 was below the national average, although all Year 2 pupils met the standard. We agreed that the third key line of enquiry would be to explore how leaders have addressed this downward trend in Year 1.
- A strategy is now in place to raise outcomes for Year 1 pupils in phonics. The school has shared the good practice in phonics teaching found in the early years, modelling teaching strategies with key stage 1 teachers to promote consistently high-quality teaching. Leaders have also initiated targeted interventions for pupils in Year 1, linked to their ability and needs. Workshops have also been provided for parents so that they are better equipped to support their children at home.
- Evidence from observation with a senior leader suggested that pupils' phonic knowledge has improved. In one session, for example, the teacher employed a game to engage the pupils and encouraged the pupils to use 'sound buttons' to help them; a teaching assistant provided the necessary support for several pupils. The pupils responded well and demonstrated that they could read new words correctly by sounding them out. As acknowledged by school leaders, this remains a priority for improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is continued and sustained progress in key stage 2, particularly in writing
- the capacity of middle leaders is further developed to enable them to have a greater impact on whole-school outcomes.

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

Yours sincerely

Brian Simber
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I held discussions with you about the school's self-evaluation and the agreed key lines of enquiry. I held a discussion with senior leaders about safeguarding procedures at the school. I met with the school business manager to review the single central record. I met with middle leaders to discuss their work. I held discussions with several members of the governing body and the school improvement partner. I met with a group of pupils to find out their views about the school. I observed a number of lessons jointly with you and senior leaders. I reviewed pupils' work in their books. I considered the responses of parents to the Parent View questionnaire, as well as the responses from staff.