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Mr David Tebbutt  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Tebbutt

### **Short inspection of Park Junior School, Wellingborough**

Following my visit to the school on 18 January 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 March 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

You have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Parents who responded to Ofsted's surveys all agree that the school is well led. One parent commented, 'This school has a fantastic headteacher and team of teachers. A school that goes the extra mile and beyond. I can't praise it enough.'

Other parents and carers were full of praise for the friendliness of all members of staff and how well they care for their children. Parents particularly appreciate how, each Friday afternoon, you are at the school gate to personally wish every child a happy weekend and to congratulate them on what they have achieved.

Staff are proud to work at Park Junior. You have high expectations of them, both as teachers and leaders. The staff rise to these. They say that teaching and learning have improved because of the high quality of the training and support they receive. Pupils' attainment and progress have been consistently in line with the national averages.

You place a strong emphasis on training and staff development. This has ensured that teaching and learning continue to improve. In all of the lessons I visited, pupils were enjoying their learning, free from interruptions or any disruptive behaviour. Pupils were proud to share their work. They confidently talked about what they were learning.

Sporting and other after-school clubs are a key feature of life at Park Junior. The great majority of these clubs are run voluntarily by school staff. Participation rates

are very high. The school's sporting achievements include being county champions in cricket and hockey. The school is one of the few in the country to have been recognised by the Youth Sport Trust as deserving of its Platinum Award.

At the time of the last inspection in 2013, inspectors recommended that you 'make sure that pupils think more for themselves'. There is strong evidence in science and mathematics that teachers are doing this. For example, in science lessons, pupils routinely decide what they are going to investigate and plan their approaches to answer the question they have set.

The inspectors also recommended that teachers increased the level of challenge in lessons for the most able pupils. Visits to lessons and work in pupils' books showed the positive impact of training you put in place in response to this. I saw examples of teachers asking questions and setting activities that ensure that the most able pupils learn the topics being covered in depth. This strong practice, however, is not yet consistent. For example, in mathematics lessons, the most able pupils were sometimes set tasks that did not offer the right amount of challenge.

You and other leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. The school's improvement plan identifies clearly the need to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils. It also details the actions you are taking to secure faster progress in reading for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Finally, the plan shows the priority you are giving to ensure that the most able pupils are suitably challenged in mathematics lessons.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The high quality of the school's safeguarding work was recently reported in the findings of a serious case review conducted by the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children's Board. The findings noted the 'excellent work' of the school's family support worker and the readiness of staff to go 'above and beyond to provide additional support when required'.

This recognition is well deserved. You have successfully promoted a strong culture of safeguarding. You have ensured that all safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose.

You, and the other designated safeguarding leaders, make sure that all staff understand the school's safeguarding policies and follow them to the letter. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding checks regularly that safeguarding procedures are robust and thorough. Referrals are made in a timely manner and records are kept confidentially and securely.

Pupils are well informed on how to keep themselves safe. The curriculum includes a sharp focus on road safety, a priority given to the busy roads around the school. Pupils who shared their views all reported that they feel safe in school. They know that the school staff will do all that they can to ensure that they are safe both inside and outside school.

## Inspection findings

- Staff who shared their views all agree that the school has improved since the previous inspection. They are proud to work at Park Junior. Senior and middle leaders told me how much they enjoy the greater responsibility they have now in driving improvement. They appreciate that you encourage them to voice their own ideas for improving teaching and learning. They value the opportunities they have to support staff in other Northamptonshire schools. The expertise, ambition and enthusiasm of the wider leadership team place the school in a strong position to keep on improving.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average. In recent years, pupils in this group have not made the same progress in reading as other pupils have made. Pupils who speak English as an additional language often struggle to answer questions in tests which require them to 'read between the lines'. As a result, staff have received training on how to promote the reading skills of inference and deduction. In the lessons I visited, I saw adults and pupils thoughtfully discussing what they were reading. They were pinpointing how the text may imply more than it actually says. Teachers now check in advance of a new activity which words or phrases may be unfamiliar. Where necessary, they pre-teach these. Ensuring that teachers consistently use these approaches is a priority in the school's improvement plan.
- About a sixth of pupils receive additional support because they have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. In 2017, this group of pupils made well below-average progress in writing. Improving their progress in writing is a performance management target for all teachers and teaching assistants. You have provided training for staff on how to help pupils overcome the barriers that are preventing them from being successful writers. At weekly meetings, staff review the progress that targeted pupils are making towards their carefully chosen, individual writing targets. There is compelling evidence in pupils' books that this focus is helping pupils master the basic skills of writing.
- In 2017, disadvantaged pupils made slower progress than other pupils. You have taken a number of actions to accelerate their progress. For example, in the last two years, very few of the most able disadvantaged pupils scored highly in the mathematics tests at the end of Year 6. This year, a specialist mathematics teacher from a local secondary school is working with the most able disadvantaged pupils to help them reach their potential.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to make sure that all the additional help they provide for disadvantaged pupils is well planned and making a difference. There is encouraging evidence that this help is having a positive impact. In most year groups and in most subjects, however, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is below that of other pupils. They are not yet catching up quickly enough.
- The school includes specially resourced provision for pupils in North Northamptonshire who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The pupils who attend the unit enjoy a broad curriculum. Skilled staff ensure that they make good progress academically. Crucially, pupils learn to deal more

effectively with the issues that have disrupted their education in the past. Many pupils, after spending a period of time attending the unit, make a successful return to their home schools.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- ensure that teachers consistently use the new approaches to teaching reading comprehension for pupils who speak English as an additional language, so that they make faster progress
- check closely and regularly that the additional support provided for disadvantaged pupils, and high-quality teaching, are helping this group of pupils to achieve as well as others
- ensure that the most able pupils in all year groups are suitably challenged in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Anthony O'Malley  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I held a range of meetings to find out about the school's effectiveness. I met with you, the deputy headteacher, other members of staff and the chair of the governing body. I met with a group of pupils and talked with other pupils around the school and during lessons. I observed teaching and learning throughout the school. I looked at work in pupils' books. I considered a number of documents, including those linked to keeping the pupils safe, the school's own evaluation of its performance and its improvement plan. I considered the 40 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I listened to the views of parents as they brought their children to school and read 38 comments left by parents using Ofsted's free-text service. I also considered the views of 33 members of staff and 54 pupils.