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Mr Richard Burbage
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Dear Mr Burbage

Short inspection of Loddon Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 8 January 2019, 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 May 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has restored a good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. When you arrived at the school in January 2017, you judged the school to have significant weaknesses. This view was shared by governors and teachers. Leaders identified mathematics and assessment to be key areas for development. The leadership team has made significant changes to how subjects are led and how assessment is used in English and mathematics to identify gaps in pupils' learning in order to inform planning and teaching. As a result of these changes, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 have risen steadily and are now broadly in line with other schools nationally. Even so, not enough pupils are reaching the higher standard in mathematics.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and they plan work that engages and enthuses pupils. Teaching assistants support pupils well in lessons. They are effective when working with pupils who are finding work difficult or those who are trying to grasp harder concepts. Teachers know their pupils well and they have developed effective relationships built on trust and mutual respect. This has given pupils confidence to take risks with their learning and learn from their mistakes. One pupil I spoke with was proud to show me work in her mathematics book, where she had got five answers wrong, but once the teacher had pointed out the misconception, she got the next ten answers correct. This reflects the resilience that pupils have developed.

Pupils are well-presented, polite and courteous. They behave well around school

and within the classroom. Pupils take a pride in their work and they are confident to talk about their learning. At breaktimes and lunchtimes they play well together and the younger pupils appreciate the support that they get from the Year 6 sports leaders and peer mentors. I spoke with a group of boys who were playing basketball, and they told me that behaviour in the playground is good because they share resources well and respect each other. This view was shared by other pupils I spoke with.

Governors are knowledgeable about the school priorities and they are effective at holding leaders to account. They carefully monitor the way in which the extra money that the school receives for disadvantaged pupils is spent and the impact it has on pupils' progress. Governors visit the school regularly and take an active part in measuring the effectiveness of the curriculum teams in raising standards in their subjects.

Most parents are positive about the school and they appreciate the quality of the education and the pastoral support that the staff provide. One parent said, 'I feel that my daughter has flourished. She is thoroughly enjoying her learning and is making excellent progress. She has thrived on the friendly and welcoming atmosphere in the school.' Another parent said, 'This school offers plenty of extra-curricular activities, and the staff are always going the extra mile to ensure that the children enjoy their time at primary school.'

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are effective in keeping children safe. You have created a culture in which all staff and governors understand the importance of their roles and responsibilities.

Effective staff training means that all adults are confident about the systems that are in place and that they know how to report any concerns that may arise. You have developed an effective pastoral system which provides early intervention for any families or pupils going through difficult times.

Pupils told me that they feel safe in school and that they know what to do if they are troubled in any way. They are very knowledgeable about the risks posed by using the internet, but they can also see what a great tool it can be when used safely.

Inspection findings

- In the school's previous inspection, it was highlighted that the role of subject leaders was not well developed. I wanted to see what actions leaders have taken to improve this. You told me that you have changed the way in which subjects are led, by making it a team responsibility rather than the responsibility of one person. Teachers with whom I spoke feel much more confident with this approach. They told me that the profile of subjects other than English and mathematics has been raised and that pupils are producing work of improved

quality. I saw this when I looked at topic and science books. Leaders have developed an effective system for assessing English and mathematics, but assessment in other subjects is still at an early stage of development.

- The second area that I discussed with you was the progress of disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, as their progress does not compare well with other pupils nationally. Leaders have identified barriers that exist for these pupils and have used the extra money that the school receives to eliminate these barriers. You told me that the extra teaching that disadvantaged pupils are given prior to lessons increases their confidence so that they are able to ask and answer questions. I saw evidence of this during our observations of teaching and learning. We looked at English, mathematics and other books, which showed that these pupils are making good progress from their different starting points.
- I looked to see what you were doing to improve progress in mathematics to bring your results in line with other schools nationally. I also wanted to see if you were providing challenge to the most able pupils to allow them to reach greater depth in their understanding.
- Leaders have made significant changes to the way in which mathematics is planned and taught and there is now a clear progression throughout the school. Leaders have provided training for teachers and have given them opportunities to plan together, and they feel much more confident when teaching mathematics. Teachers are using assessment information to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and are using this information to help them with their planning, making their teaching more precise.
- When I looked at mathematics books I could see clear progression for all groups of pupils and examples of where the most able pupils were given different work to other pupils. However, in some books most-able pupils had spent too much time working through basic arithmetic problems and had not been given enough opportunity to move on to reasoning and problem-solving skills to allow them to reach the higher standard.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- assessment for subjects other than English and mathematics is developed so that progress can be monitored and teachers can plan more effectively
- most-able pupils are given more opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills to enable them to reach a greater depth in their understanding.

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

Yours sincerely

Nick Templeton
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I visited all year groups with you, where we looked at pupils' books. I met with pupils from Year 4, and they shared some of their work with me. I also met with three governors. I took account of the 35 responses from parents to Parent View and 34 free-text comments. In addition, eight responses to the online staff survey were taken into account. I talked informally to pupils during lessons and breaktimes. Finally, I examined a range of documents, including the school development plan, assessment information, behaviour logs and safeguarding information.