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Mrs Gill Peck
Putnoe Primary School
Church Lane
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Dear Mrs Peck

Short inspection of Putnoe Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 March 2019 with Adrian Lyons HMI, 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 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

Leaders promote a clear vision for Putnoe Primary School. Their aim that the curriculum should 'bring pleasure, participation and essential skills into children's lives' is visible in every aspect of school life. Pupils', staff's and parents' views are central in all decisions that leaders make about the school. Consequently, they are proud to be part of the school community. One parent said, 'I can't recommend this school enough.' The vast majority of parents feel the same.

Pupils' engagement with the well-planned curriculum builds their confidence and self-esteem. Leaders actively seek and meaningfully use pupils' opinions about what will engage and interest them. Firm links are established between the school and other agencies, including art galleries and theatres. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, enjoy the access to radio, art, film and the theatre, and are often inspired by these unique opportunities. Pupils also engage with a range of stakeholders such as local Members of Parliament, the media and other groups, confidently and articulately. Pupils are active, keen learners who apply knowledge and skills well and most of them make good progress across the curriculum.

The curriculum, which is a strength of the school, is focused on the arts. It engages and inspires pupils. The good-quality outcomes across the curriculum are attributable to a combination of the effective curriculum and good teaching. For example, pupils' art sketchbooks demonstrate effective progress over time in deepening their knowledge and extending their skills.

Leaders have addressed the areas for improvement from the previous inspection effectively. The role of middle leaders has developed well since the previous inspection when it was an area for improvement. Leaders have a shared vision about what they want to achieve, and a strong understanding about the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. This provides them with the capacity to continue to improve standards in a meaningful and sustained way.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders promote a very positive safeguarding culture in the school. They ensure that all appropriate checks are made to ensure that staff are suitable to work in the school. Staff are appropriately trained and make appropriate referrals to the leadership team. This includes training related to protecting pupils from the impact of extremism.

The designated safeguarding lead, family support worker and attendance lead work effectively together and communicate regularly about pupils so that everyone is clear about priorities and actions. Leaders react promptly and take timely action to issues that arise. There is effective work with other agencies, including the police and social services, to ensure that pupils are safe.

All of the parents who responded to the online survey said that they felt their children were safe in school. Staff also said that pupils are safe. Pupils' behaviour is good and, as a result, pupils feel safe in school. Pupils are clear about how to keep safe online, including how to protect their personal information, and they said that adults keep them safe.

Inspection findings

- Pupils' progress in reading at the end of key stage 2 has been below the national average for three years. Leaders' actions have addressed these weaknesses so that in 2018, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 improved and pupils made better progress in reading.
- Improvements in reading have been well thought out. Leaders and adults have focused on promoting an enjoyment of reading. Adults read with pupils regularly. Leaders have also reviewed and improved the quality of texts being provided for pupils across the curriculum. This is supported well by the well-resourced and well-used library, which pupils care about, enjoy and use voluntarily. As a result, pupils are reading more widely, fluently and have better understanding, as inspectors found when they heard pupils read.
- Children acquire effective phonics skills in the early years and apply their knowledge and skills to their writing and reading. Typically, teachers correct any errors quickly and as a result of this effective intervention, children improve their handwriting and spelling.
- Despite improvements in reading, boys and disadvantaged children do not attain as well respectively as girls and non-disadvantaged children at the end of Reception. The performance of these children in the early years is not enhanced

by the provision in the outdoor learning area. This area is underdeveloped and does not encourage children in creative ways to practise skills and make the progress that they should.

- In key stage 1, pupils continue to develop appropriate phonic skills from their starting points. Resources, activities and games are well matched to pupils' abilities. As a result, pupils are developing better vocabularies as they move into key stage 2. Even so, the overall attainment of boys and disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 1 is below that of other pupils.
- Attendance was a key line of enquiry for inspectors during the inspection. Levels of persistent non-attendance have been above national averages for some time.
- Attendance is monitored well and there is effective practice in supporting pupils and families to improve their attendance at school. The number of pupils who are highlighted as a priority for improving attendance has dropped by a third. As a result, current overall attendance is the best it has been for a long period.
- However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, while not deteriorating, is not keeping pace with the improvements made by other pupils. This has a negative impact on their ability to make effective progress across the curriculum, particularly in the early years and key stage 1.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improves more rapidly so that these pupils' attendance is at least in line with the national average
- more boys and disadvantaged children attain a good level of development by the end of Reception
- boys' attainment and that of disadvantaged pupils improves further in key stage 1 so that it is in line with that of other pupils.

I am copying this letter to the board of governors, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bedford Borough. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Debbie Rogan
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and middle leaders and two representatives of the governing body. Inspectors spoke to pupils throughout the day and heard pupils read from a range of classes and year groups. Inspectors observed lessons with leaders and scrutinised a range of pupils'

work. Inspectors met with parents at the beginning of the school day and considered responses from 30 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Questionnaires received from 57 staff were also taken into consideration. A range of documents were also scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation, safeguarding records and school improvement plans and minutes of governors' meetings.