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Mrs Kelly Jackson
Head of School
Catmose Primary School
Sandringham Close
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Dear Mrs Jackson

Short inspection of Catmose Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 September 2017, 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

As head of school, you have a deep sense of care for your community, which you successfully combine with a developed understanding of effective teaching and learning. You have established a team ethos that motivates all staff to do their best for all pupils. The tangible care and commitment across your school team are highly valued by pupils and parents.

Close partnership with the executive principal, as well as the services of the academy trust, provide an effective base and network of support for the school. Governors are well informed and are using this information to work closely with school leaders to monitor performance and challenge the school to improve pupils' outcomes.

Leaders have had a consistent drive to continually improve teaching, which is a continual focus in response to the previous inspection. They have ensured that effective training for all staff is linked to whole-school developments. This has enabled the school to respond well to changing national demands and secured improved attainment across the school to match or exceed national averages. Leaders have maintained and further developed a high level of expectation and consistency, while the school has expanded considerably since the last inspection.

There have also been a considerable number of recent staff changes, especially in key stage 2 and in leadership roles. However, you and the executive principal have used rigorous recruitment processes to make highly effective appointments, bringing in further expertise to strengthen teaching and widen leadership. Rigorous induction has enabled new staff to make a confident start and sustain an admirable consistency in implementing school policies and approaches. New staff have quickly become integral to the team ethos of the school, as was reflected in the staff questionnaire and parents' overwhelming confidence that their children are well taught. Leaders have rightly identified that precise actions need to be quickly identified to enable all staff to build on improved attainment, in order to accelerate pupils' progress where it is less secure, especially in mathematics.

There is an atmosphere of mutual respect and harmony across all aspects of the school day. Pupils are courteous and polite towards each other, adults and visitors. They are diligent in taking on roles to serve their school and community such as those of monitors and school councillors, and in leading fund-raising events. Pupils overwhelmingly expressed their enjoyment of their learning, especially the trips, events and club activities, including residential visits. Their eagerness to be in school is evident in their consistently higher than average attendance.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding and the welfare of pupils are central to the ethos at Catmose Primary. You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are established and records are detailed and of high quality. The consistent systems and wider expertise across the trust give strong support to the school, and ensure rigorous vetting and recruitment procedures. Staff are all clear on how to report any concerns they may have regarding a child's welfare. Regular and appropriate training has given them a good understanding of their responsibilities to ensure children's safety and well-being. As designated safeguarding lead, you make sure that concerns are accurately recorded and make timely referrals to outside agencies. You are persistent in following up referrals to ensure that pupils and their families receive the help they need, as well as providing sensitive support within school.

All parents who responded to the Ofsted online survey agreed that their children were well cared for in school. Pupils overwhelmingly say that they feel safe. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. You have provided opportunities for them to learn about issues such as e-safety, and they develop a strong sense of personal responsibility and citizenship. Pupils told me that bullying was extremely rare and that adults listen to them and act quickly to sort out any problems.

Inspection findings

- You, the leadership team and governors have ensured, through appropriate training and well-understood policies, that staff across the school are consistent in their approaches. Pupils across the school respond well to the calm and purposeful learning environment this provides.

- Teachers and pupils have positive relationships, and pupils willingly follow their teachers' instructions in lessons. Classrooms are attractive, and displays celebrate pupils' work, and provide them with helpful prompts and examples of how to make their work better. Pupils say that they enjoy learning because teachers make work fun and support them to do their best.
- Leaders have introduced a new whole-school approach to teaching mathematics. This was due to teachers not having been as effective at securing strong progress for pupils in mathematics as in other subjects. Evidence that you shared from pupil progress meetings and the monitoring of teaching over time shows that teachers have improved their subject knowledge. This has secured more age-appropriate progression across year groups.
- We saw together, in pupils' books and across classes, that pupils are working hard, and securing age-appropriate skills. In some lessons, we saw pupils keen to prove and explain patterns they were discovering, for example in trying to find out how they could organise digits in a grid to secure the highest possible total. However, not all teachers are equally skilled in ensuring that pupils have to think hard, reason and deepen their understanding. Leaders know where teaching is strongest and are starting to use this effectively to support other staff.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a stringent assessment and tracking system in place. This, along with regular monitoring of teaching, provides them with a detailed analysis of the attainment and progress of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You regularly review pupils' progress with teachers to ensure that any pupil who is falling behind receives timely support to catch up.
- You recognise that further work is needed to identify ways in which teachers can use assessment to further accelerate pupils' progress, especially in mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers across the school use assessment more precisely to further develop pupils' reasoning skills in order for them to make more rapid progress, particularly in mathematics
- leaders use their detailed monitoring information to sharpen actions to improve all teaching across the school to match the best.

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

Yours sincerely

Mandy Wilding
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met you and the trust's executive principal, and shared my key lines of enquiry. I also met with the newly appointed deputy headteacher, and the leaders for early years, English, mathematics and science. I met with some governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a member of the trust board. I spoke with parents before school. You and I visited all classes and talked with pupils to evaluate the quality of their learning. We also looked at a sample of pupils' books within lessons and from the last academic year. I listened to pupils reading and spoke with a group of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in classes and at the breakfast club. In addition, I scrutinised a range of the school's documents, including those relating to the progress of pupils, the school's improvement planning, its self-evaluation and documents relating to safeguarding. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day and took account of 51 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 48 responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text service. I also considered the 17 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and took into consideration 69 responses from pupils to Ofsted's online survey.