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Mr David Bell
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Bell

Short inspection of Ravensmead Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 March 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 December 2011.

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 has continued to improve because of your strong leadership and determination for the whole school community to 'be the best that we can be'. This is clearly reflected in the responses by staff and parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire. They all agree that the school is well led and managed and are proud to be a part of the 'Ravensmead family'. One parent commented, 'The school isn't just there for the children but for the families too.'

Leaders have ensured that a wide range of systems is in place to track how well pupils are doing each term. You hold termly meetings with staff to discuss all pupils individually and put support in place to allow pupils to catch up with their peers if necessary. In key stage 2, pupils are taught in ability groups for English and mathematics and this works well for the vast majority of pupils. In the lower ability sets, pupils are supported well by additional adults who help them to make rapid progress. Throughout the school, adults are carefully deployed and use questioning effectively to address misconceptions and help pupils to learn well in lessons. As a result, all groups of pupils are making good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.

At the last inspection, the school was asked to raise achievement and accelerate the pace of learning for all pupils by ensuring that all teaching is good and that activities planned by the teachers meet pupils' individual needs. This has rightly remained a priority for the school since the previous inspection. You and your leaders systematically, and regularly, monitor the quality of learning and use an external consultant to validate your findings each term. If necessary, you swiftly put plans in place to further develop the skills of staff to ensure that the needs of all pupils are being met.

As a result of high-quality teaching and learning, attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 were higher than the national average in both 2014 and 2015. However, in 2016, the school's attainment at key stage 2 in writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling dipped below the national average for the first time. You anticipated that this would be the case due to your strong and rigorous assessment systems and you have ensured that all staff have received relevant training. A new spelling scheme has been introduced to improve outcomes in these priority areas.

Pupils' personal development is a high priority for the leaders of Ravensmead and is a strength of the school. You and your leaders know the pupils well and ensure that they have access to a wealth of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities both during and after the school day. You have a clear drive and ambition to raise aspirations and increase the confidence of the pupils in your care. Pupils are given responsibilities, which they take seriously. For example, your 'roving reporters' ensure that the life of the school is regularly recorded on the school website. More recently, during Science Week, your 'science ambassadors' delivered science activities to the younger pupils. Parents and pupils value these opportunities. Parents report that their children are proud to take on such roles.

During the inspection, pupils' behaviour was very positive both in lessons and at breaktimes. Pupils are welcoming and courteous and show good manners around school, to adults and to each other. They were confident to share their learning and talk about how the school teaches them to keep safe. For example, they could talk about the different forms of bullying, such as cyber bullying or racism, and knew what to do if this ever happened to them.

More work needs to be done to address the consistent implementation of the school's handwriting policy, opportunities for disadvantaged pupils to work at greater depth in mathematics and to further develop middle leadership.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding at Ravensmead. Keeping pupils safe and secure is central to the school's work. Records are meticulously kept, actions recorded and outcomes reviewed by the designated safeguarding leads. If leaders have any concerns, they make sure that these are followed up in a timely manner and that families are well supported by staff in school or by external agencies.

Leaders ensure that staff and governors receive regular, relevant training that is appropriate for the needs of the school and its context. For example, recently staff have received training on attachment theory. All members of the school community understand that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility.

Inspection findings

- At the beginning of the inspection, I met with you and leaders to agree key lines of enquiry to follow during the day. In recent years, attendance has been in line with the national average for all pupils. However, in 2016 there were some weaknesses in overall attendance and persistent absence for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Current information shows that attendance for this group of pupils is improving. Good attendance remains a priority for Ravensmead. You have effective systems in place to monitor the attendance of all pupils and reward good attendance. If you have any concerns, you are quick to liaise with parents and other agencies to ensure that pupils begin to work towards improving their attendance.
- Early years provision is a strength of the school. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2016 was above the national average. Assessments are moderated internally and externally to ensure that they are accurate. Learning journals are used effectively to record children's achievements across the curriculum. A wide range of resources and good-quality activities are planned both indoors and outdoors. Children engage fully in their learning and remain on task for long periods of time. They are supervised carefully by all adults, who intervene skilfully to move their learning forward and support their curiosity. Leaders have delivered several parent workshops to address gaps in children's learning. For example, recently the early years team delivered a workshop on shape, space and measures. One parent commented, 'It has been lovely to work alongside my child so that I can mirror it at home.'
- Disadvantaged pupils are supported well. Funding is used effectively to provide additional adults to work with pupils to ensure that they meet their end-of-year expectations. The school systematically monitors the progress of all pupils. Assessment information shows that, in most year groups, the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is diminishing across all subjects. However, this remains a priority, particularly in supporting disadvantaged pupils to achieve the highest standards in mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- Governors understand the context of the school. They are well informed because the headteacher provides a wealth of information about the work of the school. Governors come into school to look at improvements first hand and feel fully involved in the life of the school. The governors are deployed to the different committees on the basis of their skills and knowledge. This ensures that leaders are supported and challenged effectively.

- The result of consistently strong teaching across the school can be seen in the pupils' work. Good progress was seen in almost all the books looked at during the inspection. However, in some classes in key stage 2, pupils' writing did not always reflect the school's handwriting policy. This had a negative impact on the presentation of pupils' work, even when pupils had shown that they could join their writing to good effect.
- You have a relatively new team of middle leaders who are extremely keen to be part of the future development of the school. They are being well supported by more experienced colleagues and an external consultant. Together they have undertaken joint monitoring activities to secure their judgements and identify the next stages of development for their subject areas. Middle leaders have devised plans to support developments in their subject areas but these are not yet sufficiently linked to improving pupils' outcomes. As a result, leaders and governors are unable to effectively hold middle leaders to account for improvements.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- disadvantaged pupils are given more opportunities to work at greater depth in mathematics in order to achieve the highest standards by the end of key stage 2
- middle leaders provide succinct and accurate information linked to developments in their subject areas and that reflects the impact on pupils' outcomes
- the school's handwriting policy is followed consistently throughout the school in order to improve presentation.

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

Yours sincerely

Michelle Johnstone
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with members of the school leadership team to discuss and agree the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. I scrutinised a range of documents, including your assessment analysis, school self-evaluation and your school development plan. I also met with middle leaders at your request.

I conducted a learning walk in the early years foundation stage, key stage 1 and key stage 2 with you and the deputy headteacher. I talked to pupils throughout the inspection about their learning. I looked at pupils' books and reviewed the quality of learning in English and mathematics across the school.

I met with the school's office manager to review the school's single central record and safer recruitment procedures.

I met with you and your home-school link worker to review child protection logs and other documents relating to safeguarding arrangements in your school.

I held a meeting with two governors, including the vice-chair, and spoke to the chair of governors on the telephone. I also spoke to your school improvement officer on the telephone.

I met with parents on the school yard and reviewed the 107 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey and four written responses. I took account of the 30 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 17 responses to the pupil questionnaire.