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Miss Sally Dixey
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Dixey

Short inspection of Etwall Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

You communicate a clear vision and are committed to continued improvement that builds on the school's success. You are strongly supported by senior leaders and governors. Staff are proud to work at the school and, as a result, there is a good team spirit and morale is high. Teachers create a positive climate for learning and relationships between adults and pupils are good. The consistently good quality of teaching ensures that pupils are enthusiastic and confident learners who make good progress and achieve well.

Areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been effectively tackled. Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school and use this to identify strengths and areas for improvement. You actively seek new initiatives and teaching approaches, wisely evaluating them and implementing only those approaches which would be most effective in your school. You are successfully creating a climate for learning in which pupils have a 'can do' approach. Consequently, they enjoy their learning, believe that they can be successful and that anything is possible.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a culture of vigilance and records are detailed and of high quality. The single central record indicates that all required checks are made to ensure that staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children. You ensure that staff receive the up-to-date training, including training to protect pupils from extremism and radicalisation. Governors work closely with senior leaders to ensure that the work to keep pupils safe is given high priority and meets current requirements.

Pupils feel safe in all parts of the school and say they are well cared for. They told me that any rare instances of bullying or name-calling are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils play well together, respect each other and follow the school's rules. They are alert to the dangers of using the internet and social media. For example, they told me about the need to keep their passwords secure. The overwhelming majority of parents agree that the school keeps pupils safe. You actively promote good attendance for all pupils and, as a result, attendance is above the national average.

Inspection findings

- You are providing the school with strong and effective leadership. Your vision is shared by all staff, governors and pupils, and together you are creating a culture of success at the school. As a result, pupils make good progress, behave well and enjoy learning together.
- Governors know the school well and are appropriately focused on the priorities for improvement. They bring a pertinent range of professional skills and expertise to their work. The governing body makes good use of these to hold you and other senior leaders to account for pupils' progress. It checks thoroughly how the school uses its money, including funding provided to support disadvantaged pupils and for primary physical education and sport.
- Reading has a high priority throughout the school. Books are everywhere. I saw pupils taking every opportunity to read, including outside at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Pupils are enthusiastic about learning phonics and use their phonics knowledge well to learn to read new words. Teachers provide pupils with a wide range of high-quality texts and ask challenging questions in guided reading sessions, for example asking pupils to explain how the author portrays the characters' feelings. 'Book Swap Friday' encourages pupils to bring a book they have enjoyed reading to exchange with a friend, and this is successfully promoting a love of reading. Parents are well supported to listen to their children read at home and help develop their skills. As a result, pupils excel in reading.
- You have rightly identified that pupils' writing, particularly among boys, is not yet strong enough and the English leader is successfully leading on a number of initiatives to improve it. These include using a wider and more engaging range of stimuli for writing and ensuring that pupils use their grammatical techniques effectively. The practice of 'talk for writing' is contributing to pupils' enthusiasm for writing and effectively extending the range of their writing in literacy lessons.

Writing is not used routinely throughout the curriculum, however, in the same way that reading is. This limits pupils' opportunities to write extended pieces for a wide range of purposes in subjects other than English.

- Pupils participate in a wide range of sporting activities and are keen competitors. The Year 6 football team has achieved great success this year as the regional final winners. Pupils confirm that they enjoy taking part in sport and physical education activities and recognise the important contribution this makes to developing a healthy lifestyle.
- The leader responsible for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities keeps a close eye on the progress that individual pupils make. Effective support programmes help pupils to achieve well. There are excellent examples of where the school has worked with other agencies to support vulnerable pupils to help them improve their behaviour, attendance and academic progress.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour around school are good. In lessons, pupils sustain good concentration and try hard with their work. There is a very calm and friendly atmosphere in the dining room at lunchtime as pupils chat happily together over lunch. Their conduct reflects the school's effective strategies to promote high standards of behaviour.
- Pupils were excited to tell me about their topic homework. They told me about the 'Homework Showcase' event on inspirational people, which included work on Nelson Mandela, Tim Peake and William Shakespeare. This is successfully extending and consolidating pupils' knowledge, developing their skills in a range of subjects and making a positive contribution to pupils' achievement.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They told me that communication was good, that they felt listened to and that their views were taken account of. One parent said, reflecting the views of many, 'I feel that the school is always looking for new ideas and moving forward.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers use a wider range of stimuli to engage pupils in writing so they can reach as high standards in writing as they do in reading, particularly for boys
- teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes and at length in subjects other than English.

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

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Bathgate
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the deputy headteacher, the English subject leader, three members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and two groups of pupils. We visited several classes together to see pupils and staff at work. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school, at breaktimes and during lessons. I met a number of parents informally at the beginning of the school day and considered the views of 67 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I also considered two letters received from parents. I considered 25 responses to a staff questionnaire. I evaluated a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies.