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Ms Gita Patel
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Dear Ms Patel

Short inspection of Shenton Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 March 2016, 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 March 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You lead a team of staff who work well together and feel proud to be part of Shenton Primary School. Staff at all levels speak highly of how much you value their contribution to the life of the school. They know that you have high expectations of them and they were keen to tell me that these high expectations are backed up by the strong emphasis you place on training and development for staff. They appreciate this because they know that this is helping them to improve their skills.

Shenton Primary School has a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. The classrooms are busy, purposeful places for pupils to learn. As we toured the school together, pupils greeted both you and me with cheery smiles and a polite 'Good morning' or 'Hello'. Pupils enjoy attending the school. Invariably, pupils told me that the best thing about the school was 'our learning'. One pupil explained, 'The best thing about this school is that we learn something new every day.'

You and your staff work effectively to build positive relationships with families. There are opportunities throughout the year for parents to come into school for workshops to support them with behaviour management or to understand how to help their child with their learning at home. These workshops are well attended. Every parent I spoke with and those who responded to the online survey, Parent View, said that they were pleased with the teaching and the leadership of the school. They are confident that their children are safe at Shenton Primary School.

Governors have a clear view of the strengths and areas for development of the school. They are highly ambitious for the pupils. They are proud that pupils at Shenton Primary School have opportunities to develop personally and socially as well as academically. Many of them visit the school regularly to see it in action and they ask searching questions during meetings. However, you recognise that there is further scope for governors to check some aspects of the school's work more closely, for example by checking that all of the primary sport funding is being used to best effect.

At the previous inspection, inspectors praised you for being the driving force behind the improvements at the school. Inspectors also recognised the support that you received from your leadership team. This drive for continuous improvement has not faltered. You have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school and you focus closely on these in the school's development planning process. You are constantly seeking out ways to improve the school, visiting other schools to find the most effective practice. You encourage your leadership team and teachers to do the same. You systematically implement new policies and provide necessary training for staff. You check carefully to see if these changes are having a positive outcome for pupils. If not, you review your practice. When you do so, you scrutinise pupils' outcomes and you consult with teachers to gain their views. This emphasises your inclusive approach to school improvement.

You have addressed the issues raised at the last inspection. Attendance is now consistently above the national average. Standards in English and mathematics have risen since the school's last inspection. However, you acknowledge that there is even more scope to improve pupils' progress in writing, for example by making sure teachers expect pupils to apply the skills they learn during English lessons in all other subject areas. The provision for children in the early years has also improved. You are now making much better use of the outdoor area. We saw children writing simple sentences about Easter and others drawing the daffodils that were growing in the garden area. Adults supported children well to take part in an egg and spoon race, practising balancing skills as they had fun. With the effective support of the deputy headteacher, the new early years leader, appointed in September 2015, is developing a good understanding of the strengths of the early years provision and what needs to be improved. She is keen to make improvements in order for children to be able to make even better progress across these early years.

The school has a website that does not comply with statutory requirements. Information about the impact of the primary sport funding or about school governors is incomplete.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have made safeguarding a priority. You make sure that the appropriate checks are made when new staff start to work at Shenton Primary School. Staff have regular training in safeguarding and know how to report any concerns they may have. Records are well kept and referrals that you make to social care are followed

through with rigour. The school's family support worker provides useful early help for families that need it. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They speak knowledgeably about how to stay safe when they are using the internet and learn about stranger danger and road safety.

Inspection findings

- You provide effective leadership to the school. You have systematically improved the quality of teaching throughout the school in recent years. The clear approach that you have introduced was evident in all the classes we visited. A cycle of reviewing previous learning and ongoing assessment is pivotal to your approach. This means that learning is well matched to pupils' abilities in lessons to ensure that they make good or better progress.
- You are not complacent. You regularly review all aspects of the school to make sure that they are continuing to be effective. Where they are not, you are not afraid to make changes. For example, you have recently reviewed the system of setting pupils by ability for English and mathematics lessons at key stage 2 to be certain it is still effective in raising standards. You identified that it is now more successful for some subjects and some year groups than others. With this in mind, you have plans for improving this approach. This typifies your drive for continuous improvement.
- You have revised the system for tracking pupils' progress. All staff understand this new approach due to the appropriate and effective training they have received. Leaders meet with teachers to review the progress all pupils are making and ensure pupils receive additional support or challenge. You have checked that the assessments teachers are making are accurate.
- Last year, you introduced a new method for teaching phonics (the link between letters and sounds) in Year 1. This has proved to be very successful. In 2015, there was a sharp increase in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard so that it was above the national average. As a result of this success, you have introduced this method of teaching phonics into the Nursery and Reception classes. On our tour of the school, and in books, we saw children at the early stages of writing using their phonics skills well to make plausible attempts at spelling.
- Most children enter the early years with skills and knowledge below those typically expected for their age. A significant majority of pupils speak English as an additional language and every year pupils join the school who are new to English and new to living in England. Pupils make good progress from their starting points. Published information relating to key stage 2 reading, writing and mathematics shows that, up to 2015, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, reached standards that were in line with, and sometimes above, national expectations. You were disappointed, but not surprised, by the uncharacteristic dip in standards at the end of 2015. You have identified the reasons for this dip and school information shows that this year more

pupils are making good progress over time in English and mathematics. However, when pupils are completing written work in areas of the curriculum other than English, teachers do not always insist upon the high standards of punctuation, spelling and grammar that they expect in English lessons.

- You use the pupil premium funding well to make sure that disadvantaged pupils have the support they need to make good progress. This includes the most-able pupils, who can access additional clubs such as homework club and receive additional support to help them achieve the higher levels of attainment.
- The primary sport funding is enabling pupils to enjoy sports such as basketball and football. However, teachers are not always present when sports coaches teach lessons in physical education (PE). This means that you are not using the primary sport funding appropriately to improve teachers' skills in teaching PE.
- Pupils behave well in and around the school. In class, they engage effectively with their learning, they cooperate well and listen attentively when an adult is speaking to them. Pupils say that behaviour is good and that name-calling or bullying are rare. They know what to do if this does happen. They know they are safe and that staff care for them. As one pupil explained, 'We are with our friends and people that we trust.'
- The school provides a curriculum that is engaging and designed to meet the needs and interests of the pupils. For all classes, each new school year starts with a short topic entitled 'Respect'. Pupils are reminded about anti-bullying in all forms. There are strong links with a Leicestershire primary school which provides opportunities for pupils to share and celebrate their different cultural heritages. Pupils enjoy visiting this school. They told me, 'We are proud to represent our school and we like making new friends.' Every new topic starts with a 'Wow' and often culminates in an event that parents can attend. Pupils spoke excitedly about a fashion show they had put on for their parents, wearing clothes they had designed and made themselves. The curriculum is further enhanced by trips, such as to the Space Centre in Leicester, which pupils enjoy.
- Pupils learn about British values through the school rules, the election of the school council, the annual 'Respect' topic and visitors such as the police, fire service and the local Member of Parliament. Pupils enjoy receiving rewards during assembly for demonstrating the school's values of respect, confidence, collaboration, communication, perseverance and enquiry. Older pupils can apply for responsible roles, such as peer mediators and play buddies. They hold these positions proudly and enjoy the responsibility it gives them.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- progress in writing is accelerated by checking that the high standards expected of grammar, punctuation and spelling insisted upon in English lessons are equally applied by pupils when they write in other subjects
- the primary sports funding is used to best effect, including to improve teachers' ability to teach PE
- governors broaden the range of strategies they adopt to monitor the school's work so that they can hold leaders to account more rigorously
- the school's website meets the statutory requirements in order to provide parents with the information they need.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Leicester City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Di Mullan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, the early years leader, six other members of staff, a group of pupils and four governors, including the chair of governors. I held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority and a teacher from the Phoenix Pupil Referral Unit. I spoke with parents as they brought their children to school in the morning and considered the 48 responses to the online survey, Parent View. I observed pupils moving around the school at breaktime and in the hall at lunchtime. I visited the school's breakfast club. I scrutinised pupils' books with you and we looked at the school's latest achievement and assessment information together. I considered a range of documentation, including the school's safeguarding records and policies.