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8 June 2016

Wendy Cording
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Cording

Short inspection of Eggbuckland Vale Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 May 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 your school was judged to be good in September 2010.

Context

Since the previous inspection, there have been changes in the headship and staffing at the school. The school continues to host a centre for pupils with hearing impairment.

This school continues to be good.

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

You have successfully created an inclusive ethos in the school by matching the curriculum, teaching and learning to the individual needs of pupils. You and the leadership team constantly evaluate the impact of the provision in order to improve it. The governors increasingly make an effective contribution to school improvement by holding you to account for the progress pupils make.

Your incisive evaluation of the progress information for individual pupils and groups of pupils ensures that there is little difference in the progress of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs or disability and those who are supported by the pupil premium. Pupils mostly now make good progress in writing, including the most able who were not making good progress last year. You identified progress in writing as a priority in school improvement planning and have provided a range of

effective training for staff which is improving the quality of teaching and learning. You are increasing the capacity for further improvement in the school by effectively developing the monitoring and evaluation skills of the senior and middle leaders. They accurately analyse progress information, check pupils' books, observe lessons and talk to pupils about their progress. They hold regular meetings with staff about the progress their pupils make. Together, leaders and staff identify the personal development and learning needs of individual pupils and make effective provision to address them. The result is seen in pupils' improving attitudes to learning and in the rising trend in attainment.

Since the previous inspection, you have reviewed the curriculum to make it more interesting for the pupils. You and the new leader for the early years have improved the provision and outcomes for children in the early years foundation stage. The improvements in the use of assessment and observations have resulted in the proportion of children now achieving a good level of development being above the national average.

You have maintained a good focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning by investing in the development of teachers and teaching assistants. You take care to provide good-quality training and adapt it to meet the specific needs of your school. The effectiveness can be seen, for example, in improvements in pupils' writing. While teachers make better use of assessment to plan lessons to meet the range of pupils' needs than at the time of the previous inspection, teachers are not consistently checking that pupils are meeting the challenge of the higher expectations that are set for them in writing. Some teachers are identifying precisely what the pupils need to do to improve their use of language and, as a result, the pupils are making rapid progress. However, this rapid progress is not yet seen in all year groups.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of good quality. Policy and procedures are up to date and reviewed annually. You have ensured that staff are suitably trained, including in preventing the radicalisation of pupils. Staff can explain the school's policy and procedures for child protection. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and they can explain how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.

Inspection findings

- The leadership team is improving the teaching and learning of phonics (letters and the sounds that they represent), particularly in the early years and key stage 1, which is resulting in pupils applying their knowledge of these letters and sounds well in reading and writing. At the end of key stage 2 last year, the proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, making and exceeding progress in reading, writing and mathematics was close to or above national figures from almost all starting points except for the most able in writing. You are addressing progress in writing effectively this year.
- You use the pupil premium well to provide additional support for disadvantaged pupils from trained teaching assistants. Consequently, the gap in the pupils' attainment compared with that of other pupils in the school and nationally has almost closed. You also enable pupils with special educational needs or disability, including those with social, emotional and behavioural needs, to progress as well as others by identifying and meeting their specific needs. Hearing-impaired pupils continue to make rapid progress due to the high-quality specialist provision and the support provided by the specialists for all staff.
- Improvements in writing, especially for the most able pupils, include the use of an increasing vocabulary and ability to join ideas in sentences. It also includes better organisation into well-punctuated paragraphs. The subject leader has identified the need to extend pupils' spelling strategies. From the early years, pupils learn to write in a neatly joined style which helps them to jot down their ideas quickly. They produce extended writing across subjects and take pride in its presentation. Pupils make most progress in classes where the teacher identifies for them the most relevant aspects to improve, such as consistent use of tenses or more varied ways to join parts of sentences. Not all teachers are identifying the next steps so precisely.
- The new assessment system and curriculum are raising teachers' expectations of what the pupils can achieve. Teachers are finding the assessment criteria helpful in planning lessons and identifying any gaps in pupils' learning. Training in questioning techniques is helping teachers to deepen pupils' understanding. However, not all teachers are making sure that pupils are working at the higher expectations set for them in writing.

- Pupils are keen to learn and they support each other exceptionally well. For example, pupils act as playground buddies and 'HMS Heroes ambassadors', trained to discuss and provide peer support for children of service families. Pupils are taught how to keep safe, for example from bullying, including cyber-bullying, and say that they feel safe in school. Pupils say that there is little bullying in the school and that staff deal with any incidents effectively. However, a small minority of parents disagree with this and feel that behaviour is not good. Observations of pupils in lessons and around the school, and examination of the school's records, show that through a nurturing approach, leaders and staff help those with behavioural difficulties to build positive relationships with staff and other pupils, to recognise unacceptable behaviour and to be ready to learn. You make sure that good use is made of the family support officer to help parents to support their children's personal development and learning, and to tackle persistent absence. As a result, pupils' attendance is above average.
- Governors have an increasing understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement through monitoring progress against the school's improvement plan and the impact on pupils' progress. You have identified the need to use the new assessment system to set key milestones in the improvement plan to help governors to measure the progress being made during the year. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities, including for safeguarding, and their training is up to date. They ensure resources, including staff, the pupil premium and primary physical education and sports premium, are used effectively. For example, the physical education and sports premium has increased pupils' participation in sport through additional after-school clubs, and has increased teachers' skills in providing new activities such as basketball.
- You make effective use of training from a range of providers, adapting it to meet the specific needs of your teachers and pupils. This includes training for the new leader of the early years provision, training in phonics and in checking the accuracy of assessments from an external literacy team, and training in supporting pupils' emotional literacy. You also make good use of your consultant school improvement partner to ensure that your self-evaluation is robust.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that teachers secure rapid progress for pupils in writing by:

- sharing the best practice in informing pupils precisely what they need to do to improve their use of language
- developing teachers' skills in checking during lessons that pupils are meeting the challenge of the higher expectations that are set for them.

Yours sincerely

Sue Frater

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and with other senior and middle leaders, a group of pupils and members of the governing body, and spoke to staff and pupils in the playground at break. I spoke with your consultant school improvement partner on the telephone.

You and I visited classes together and we looked at the quality of pupils' writing in a sample of their books. We discussed the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' attitudes and their progress.

I examined a range of documents, including your self-evaluation, school improvement plan, and records relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour. I took account of the 49 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey and 27 responses to the online staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the online questionnaire for pupils.