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Mr David Fox
Headteacher
Ridgeway Primary Academy
The Ridgeway
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Dear Mr Fox

Short inspection of Ridgeway Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 26 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in May 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 lead the school well. Your deputy and middle leaders are very knowledgeable and also provide good leadership. Governors are skilled and carry out their roles effectively. As a result, outcomes have continued to rise since the last inspection and are significantly above the national averages at both key stages 1 and 2 for all subjects.

Pupils enjoy their learning and behave well. Year 6 pupils told me about their recent residential visit to France, completing physical activities and visiting the war cemeteries in Normandy. The relationships between adults and pupils are good and this ensures a positive learning environment in all the classrooms. Consequently, pupils are making good progress in their learning.

At the previous inspection, the inspectors asked you to secure the rate of pupils' progress in key stage 1. You have had much success with this area for improvement. Although there was a dip in 2014, outcomes in the other years have been significantly above the national average for reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1.

The inspector also asked you to ensure all teaching is consistently good or better. The vast majority of teaching is good or better. However, where teaching needs to improve, you have implemented support, and pupils are now making better progress following the action you have taken.

The school needs to make further improvements to pupils' writing from Year 2 through to Year 6. Although pupils can compose short pieces of writing very well, they do not have enough opportunities to write at length and develop into very good writers. In addition, pupils do not always spell words that they should know, nor do they take care to present their work to a high standard.

The school needs also to improve the science curriculum by increasing the number of investigations that the pupils complete to develop their scientific skills further.

The school tracks attendance well and takes action when a pupil's attendance drops. As a result, attendance is above the national average for all groups of learners

Safeguarding is effective.

The school works well with a range of agencies, including social care, and employs a family support worker to meet the needs of pupils and their families. School records are detailed and securely stored. Staff training is up to date. The governors monitor the school's safeguarding policies and procedures closely. The nominated governor scrutinises all aspects of the school's safeguarding practices and reports back to the rest of the governing body. The leadership has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

The school's behaviour logs show that there are very few incidents of poor behaviour. Occasionally, some pupils do not concentrate as well as they should in lessons. Lunchtime is well organised with a separate playground for balls, and a rota for the adventure playground. Pupils told me that bullying is infrequent and that teachers help them to sort out any problems. Pupils also told me that behaviour is generally good. They think the traffic light system works well to maintain good behaviour because pupils do not want to miss their 'Ridgeway time.'

Inspection findings

- You and your team closely check the quality of teaching and the progress pupils are making. Where you judge progress not to be good, you take decisive action and this has led to improvements in the quality of pupils' work. The performance management of teachers is comprehensive. As a result, pupils make good progress through the school and achieve highly by the end of Year 6.
- Your middle leaders contribute well to the leadership of the school. Through checking pupils' work, the leader for mathematics identified that pupils were not developing their mathematical reasoning skills. Following training, all teachers have a reasoning display board in their classrooms to explain to the pupils what reasoning is and the types of questions they should be able to answer. Teachers have provided more opportunities for pupils to reason mathematically and they ask pupils to explain how they have reached their answers. Consequently, most pupils are making good progress in

mathematics. However, there are occasions in Years 3 and 4 when the most able pupils are not challenged to extend their learning sufficiently.

- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress through the school. There are too few disadvantaged pupils to comment about their attainment at the end of key stage 2 without the risk of identifying them.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. The vast majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, felt their child was taught well and the school was well led. All parents said their child was safe at school.
- Pupils make a good start in the early years. For example, during the inspection the children were inspired to build tall castles collaboratively, using wooden blocks or foam, after reading the fairy story of 'Jack and the beanstalk'. The children were also writing instructions on how to plant a seed. They were using imperative verbs at the start of sentences and reading their work afterwards. As a result, they were making very good gains in their learning.
- Children's learning journeys in Reception show good progress is being made over time in all areas of the foundation stage curriculum. In addition to the work children complete at school, parents' contributions from home are used to inform how well the children are progressing. If children do not understand a concept, they are supported well in small groups with an adult. Consequently, outcomes at the end of Reception are above the national average and rising.
- Pupils in Year 1 continue to make very good progress with their writing. They write in sentences and at length to retell stories. Pupils have also completed detailed information texts about how a butterfly is formed. Evidence in books shows pupils continue to use imaginative vocabulary to write good-quality sentences in short pieces of writing through the school. This can particularly be said of the most able pupils. However, opportunities for pupils to write at length after Year 1 are not as frequent. Consequently, some of the key stage 2 pupils do not use paragraphs as well as they should to structure their writing. In addition, pupils misspell too many words that they should know and do not always present their work neatly.
- Outcomes for the Year 1 phonics screening check fell in 2015, and were below the national average. However, the school predicts that more pupils will pass the check this year.
- The pupils told me how much they enjoy the topics they study. In key stage 1, pupils have completed some very impressive projects at home linked to their rainforest topic. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have used watercolours well to paint in the style of LS Lowry. In Years 5 and 6, pupils could tell me about the influences Ancient Greeks have had on modern architecture; for example, the design of the British Museum. Pupils learn Mandarin in key

stage 1, and learn to speak and write short phrases in French in key stage 2. As a result of their enjoyment in varied learning activities, pupils make good progress in a range of curriculum areas.

- Pupils show high levels of resilience in their learning. The Year 5 and 6 pupils were challenged to solve a mathematical problem linked to their Ancient Greek topic. Pupils had to think of their own strategies of how to solve the problem. This challenged all pupils, including the most able. Teachers and teaching assistants supported the pupils well without giving away the answers. There was palpable excitement in the classrooms when pupils finally achieved the answer.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work in science shows that pupils are learning scientific knowledge. However, teachers do not give enough opportunities for pupils to plan investigations, record results and write up their own conclusions. Consequently, pupils are not developing their scientific skills as well as they should.
- The school uses a range of external professionals, including speech and language therapists, to support pupils who have special educational needs or disability. The special educational needs coordinator monitors pupils' individual educational plans to ensure that learning targets are appropriate. The school works well to ensure that sporting activities are inclusive. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs or disability are making good progress.
- There is a range of skills and expertise on the governing body which enables governors to hold school leaders to account. Governors rigorously monitor the progress of key priorities set out in the school improvement plan and ask pertinent questions about the progress that pupils are making. Consequently, governors are well informed and pupils are making good progress.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different faiths and cultures. Older pupils have visited a gurdwara in Leicester and enjoyed writing an audio guide following their visit. Pupils are respectful of people who may have different lifestyles to that of their own. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs for pupils to develop their physical fitness. These include cricket, dance and cross country running. The school participates in competitive sports against other schools. Both the girls' and the boys' football teams results are posted on the school's website. The school's tracking information shows that the number of pupils participating in clubs, and representing the school in competitions, is increasing.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' writing improves by giving them more opportunities to write at length, increase their ability to spell age-appropriate words and to improve the presentation of their work
- pupils are given more opportunities to investigate in science, including planning their own investigations, and writing up their conclusions.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Finch
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met you, the deputy headteacher, the leaders of the early years, key stages 1 and 2, and the special educational needs coordinator. I spoke with parents and observed pupils at breaktime. I met with a group of pupils from key stages 1 and 2. I visited every classroom with you and we looked at pupils' work. I met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. You and I reviewed documents about keeping children safe and about pupils' behaviour and attendance. I studied your school improvement plan and your school's self-evaluation. I looked at your documents relating to performance management. I considered the 44 responses to Parent View, the 25 responses to the Ofsted free text service and a letter from a parent.