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Mrs Carolyn Atkins
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Dear Mrs Atkins

Short inspection of Lypiatt Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 November 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 November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

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

Under your leadership, Lypiatt Primary School has continued to flourish. The small number of pupils, all children of service families, find stability, high-quality care and success during the typically short time they are with you. You have created a strong family culture which welcomes all newcomers and places the highest value on pupils' learning. Pupils, teachers, parents and governors are proud to be part of the school community. You and your team of teachers work together with the determination to provide the best possible welfare and learning environment and continually strive to make further improvements.

You have addressed effectively the areas highlighted for improvement at the previous inspection. For example, the well-planned teaching of phonics has resulted in a strong reading culture, even for pupils who have had a previously interrupted education.

You, your governors and teachers have an accurate view of the strengths and areas to develop further in the school. You use a robust system to assess quickly the starting points of pupils when they arrive and this enables you to track and demonstrate the good progress in learning that they make. You understand the need to engage fully with parents in supporting their children, especially in reading.

You can demonstrate convincingly the strong value you add to a pupil's education.

The governing body provides high-quality support and rigorously challenges school leaders. Performance management targets are used well to judge your success and set a direction for school development. Governors appropriately seek an independent view of the school and share these findings regularly at governing body meetings. In doing so, they verify the comprehensive information that you provide to them. Governors are regularly on hand to provide support and advice for school leaders, making good use of the wide range of skills and knowledge they possess.

Your leaders work very effectively with external agencies, such as military welfare services and the local authority. You rightly place a high value on working in partnership with leaders from other schools as part of the local cluster. In doing so, your teachers are able to keep up to date with curriculum development and new assessment practice and retain their skills in teaching larger groups of pupils.

Parents say that communication with the school is very effective. They appreciate how well the school keeps them informed about their child's progress. Parents praise highly how responsive you and your leaders are when they share a concern with you or when they need advice.

You and your teachers have planned a curriculum that is well balanced and provides excitement and fascination. Teachers respond flexibly as they adjust to the needs of pupils who arrive at short notice. Themes are developed that can be used across year groups and to avoid repeating topics covered in previous schools. For example, although the topic 'homes and living' is used to teach history, they sensibly avoid teaching particular periods in history that may have been taught elsewhere. Teachers plan effectively for mixed-year classes that have some pupils who need intensive intervention to catch up with their peers.

You have very successfully developed a strong and talented group of school leaders and teachers. Under your guidance, they significantly improve the school. They respond skilfully to the challenges that pupils bring with them to the school, particularly those who have attended many schools and arrive with gaps in their learning. The teachers carefully build pupils' self-esteem and confidence to learn. In doing so, they make sure that pupils are well prepared to move on to the next stage of their education.

Safeguarding is effective.

A strong culture of safeguarding exists, with a shared understanding of the need to be vigilant in protecting pupils against all possible risks. Staff are knowledgeable about pupils and their families and routinely keep leaders informed about any concerns.

All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and accurate. Policies and procedures are up to date and firmly adhered to. Recent staff training means that staff are clear about how safeguarding practice is integral to

their work. This includes making sure that all staff understand their role in the prevention of pupils being influenced by extremism and radicalisation.

You and your governing body effectively monitor policies and procedures that keep pupils safe. This includes the careful vetting of staff prior to their recruitment.

The pupils I spoke to during my visit confirmed that they feel safe in school. They know there are adults to talk to who will help them if they have a concern or worry. As a consequence of pupils frequently starting and leaving the school, themes in the curriculum concerning safeguarding, such as e-safety, are often repeated during the year to make sure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe.

Inspection findings

- You have created a culture of the highest expectations of teaching and care that is central to the school's improvement. You use praise to generate a strong climate of success among pupils who often have not enjoyed learning before. You communicate clearly and frequently with parents so they can play a full part in their child's learning successes. Consequently, teaching, learning and personal development remain securely good.
- Evidence in pupils' books and from school assessment information shows that pupils typically make accelerated progress during the few months they spend at the school. Teachers make effective use of a detailed initial assessment of pupils' reading, writing and mathematics, which identifies what pupils have missed. They also assess any emotional needs pupils have that may inhibit their learning. An intensive individual programme then builds pupils' confidence and enables them to be successful learners. Parents report how their child's previous experience had often resulted in them falling behind. They praised highly the way pupils now engage with learning as a result of teachers' care.
- The range of interventions used during the year for pupils is extensive and effective. While at the time of my visit there were eight pupils on roll, you showed me that you may have as many as 50 pupils through the school in any one year. Often these pupils require specific interventions that require additional resources.
- You have built a strong relationship with a military trust that successfully assists you in providing additional resources quickly. For instance, you have recently equipped a sensory room. You use the pupil premium and service premium funding judiciously to support the learning of eligible pupils. Funds equip accelerated learning schemes and support pupils in developing a healthy lifestyle, such as by providing a wholesome breakfast.
- Most children enter the school with poorly developed skills in listening, speaking and counting. You have developed a visually lively early years area that provides opportunities for creative learning, including in literacy, mathematics and understanding the world. The bespoke programme and close attention from additional adults mean that children progress well. You have rightly identified the need to develop more opportunities for young children to develop their mark making in preparation for writing and drawing.

- Pupils read widely and regularly, and enjoy talking about their favourite authors. They read aloud with enthusiasm, using the punctuation well to guide them in how to read with meaning. For pupils that make slower progress in reading, you use additional adults to tackle their specific difficulties. The school achieves an effective balance between giving pupils time to read in school and on their own. They record every day what they have read with their parents. Pupils are encouraged to choose from a range of types of books to ensure a balance between fiction and non-fiction.
- Your carefully constructed curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to apply numeracy skills and to write at length. Towards the end of key stage 2, pupils confidently select correct grammar and choose words that match the purpose of the writing and intended audience. The teaching of mathematics is strong throughout the curriculum. Through the use of carefully chosen questions and challenging tasks, pupils deepen their understanding and expand their knowledge. Teachers choose engaging topics, such as the natural world, in a dedicated science week to teach science. Pupils are therefore able to undertake prolonged investigations and experiments and produce longer pieces of writing.
- You are rightly aware that many of your pupils need experiences away from service life to broaden their cultural knowledge and to develop an understanding of British values. You frequently organise trips, such as to Buckingham Palace. These visits are used effectively as starting points for learning, for example about democracy and rights.
- By working closely with teachers from other local schools, you ensure that your pupils do not miss opportunities to take part in sport and music events. For example, a nearby larger school in the cluster runs two sports teams so that pupils from Lypiatt Primary School can take part. You use the sport funding grant well to expand the opportunities for your pupils to experience a wide range of sporting events, such as in swimming.
- The views of the parents who responded to Parent View, the Ofsted questionnaire, support the overwhelmingly positive responses that the school receives from the surveys it carries out. One parent described the school as 'providing my child with stability and she has flourished'. In describing how their child was prepared for the next move, parents said that their children gained so much confidence to learn at Lypiatt Primary School that they were in top groups and were 'flying' in their new, much larger school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- children in the early years have more opportunities to draw and make marks to which they attach a meaning, such as early letter formation, in order to build their writing skills.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Jenner
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you to discuss the school's self-evaluation, information about pupils' progress and recent improvements, including those in response to action points from the previous inspection. I also held discussions with middle leaders, the chair of the governing body and another governor. I spoke to your local authority school adviser and a representative who liaises with military welfare services. I spoke with a member of a military education trust that provides funding for intervention work. I also spoke to a headteacher from within the local cluster of schools. We visited all three classes and looked at a sample of pupils' work, including from children in the early years and Year 6 pupils who left in 2016. I listened to pupils reading and I spoke to them about their experiences of school life. I looked at the survey results from Parent View, some online and some that were printed, and I considered any accompanying comments. I met with parents, including those of pupils who have recently moved to another school. I also examined records kept by school leaders concerning the safeguarding of children.

The key lines of enquiry tested on this short inspection were:

- how effectively leaders judge the rate of pupils' progress for the time they are on roll at Lypiatt Primary School
- how effective the teaching of basic literacy skills is in the early years and key stage 1
- how effectively school leaders advocate for children when working in partnership with outside agencies.