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Mrs Anne Clayton
Acting headteacher
Cophorne Community Infant School
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Dear Mrs Clayton

Short inspection of Cophorne Community Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 12 January 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 April 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since that inspection, there have been a significant number of staff and governor changes but these have now stabilised. The parents I spoke with and the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were almost unanimous that the changes you have made since your arrival in November 2015 have brought further improvements to the school. Parents hold the school and its staff in high esteem. One parent told me she particularly values the caring and vibrant atmosphere that is ever-present around the school, while another told me of his confidence that staff will act, should he or his child have a concern.

The pupils enjoy coming to school. Levels of engagement in their learning are high in each class. From their entry into the early years, routines are quickly established with the benefit of this evident in all classes as pupils work cooperatively and purposefully together. Pupils are proud of their achievements. They quickly grow in confidence with each other and with adults. Many were eager to share their work with me, with one child in the early years taking me under her wing to make sure I saw all that was going on in her class.

You and your fellow acting headteacher have worked closely to address the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. You have focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning across all classes.

Class teachers and teaching assistants are consistent in their approach to assessing pupils' learning after each lesson and planning next steps accordingly. Teachers set targets for each pupil's learning which, while often ambitious, could sometimes be even higher, especially in writing. Adults' questions are often well thought out to extend pupils' ideas and vocabulary. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to challenge pupils' reasoning and secure their understanding.

You rightly identified that the teaching of phonics was inconsistent, addressing this by ensuring that staff received and implemented additional training successfully. The early years teacher plans rich and varied learning tasks that ensure children are encouraged to use their speaking and listening skills often, each day. This focus on extending vocabulary continues through the school and pupils' phonic and reading skills develop well as a result.

Senior leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's performance and the actions required to improve the school further. While these plans have enabled the school to improve rapidly since your arrival, they do not offer sufficient detail to enable leaders to prioritise actions as well as they might. Neither is there enough detail to fully hold governors, leaders or teachers to account for their roles and responsibilities in improving the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Annual safeguarding audits and a recent review of the school's procedures and practices have resulted in further improvements to the care and protection of pupils. You and your team take great pride in knowing each pupil and their family well and this ensures prompt action should the need arise. Leaders are tenacious in seeking external support for the small number of pupils who have additional behavioural or social needs. There is good evidence of the positive impact of this support on the behaviour of these pupils, over time. Leaders, governors and staff undertake regular training relevant to child protection and safeguarding issues, such as raising awareness of the risks of extremism, drugs and alcohol misuse and children missing education.

Inspection findings

- You and your leadership team have introduced effective assessment and tracking systems that provide very clear analysis of the progress and attainment of each pupil. Leaders hold teachers to account for the progress of each pupil on a half-termly basis, ensuring that progress targets are met.
- Teachers and teaching assistants deliver effective programmes of additional support. These are increasing the rates of progress for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the early years relish the range of well-planned learning activities. For example, two boys were totally absorbed in their role play as bakers. They explained what they were baking in the oven and were selling a range of breads and pastries to any passers-by, using their emerging counting skills to calculate

the cost. The teacher accurately assesses each child's developmental needs, carefully monitoring to ensure that children regularly access all areas of provision. As a result, children of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress from their starting points.

- Levels of pupils' absence have been inconsistent in recent years and were above the national average last year, particularly rates of persistent absence. The low pupil numbers at the school mean that a small number of extended absences through illness had a significant impact on these figures. However, publishing weekly attendance figures, celebrating good attendance, challenging absences promptly and positive relationships with external support agencies show that leaders are taking all possible steps to maximise pupils' attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve so that pupils' progress is further accelerated, particularly in writing
- teachers' questioning further extends pupils' thinking and reasoning to embed and deepen pupils' learning
- leaders are more precise in their plans for school improvement so that key next steps are identified, with clear milestones for success, and through which leaders and teachers can be held fully accountable for the impact of their actions.

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

Stephen McMullan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met you and shared my key lines of enquiry. I also met with the school's other acting headteacher, six governors, the school's local authority adviser and parents at the start of the school day. I considered the responses of parents from Parent View. We visited all classes in the school, spending a short time in each, and looked at a sample of pupils' work together.

I viewed a range of documents including an evaluation of the school's performance and plans for further improvement, information on how the pupil premium is spent and a number of policy documents, including those for child protection and special educational needs.