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Paul Schumann
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Dear Mr Schumann

Short inspection of Ambergate Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 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 March 2012.

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 strong and committed leadership, pupils have continued to make good progress and attain above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of each key stage. You have also worked hard to raise attainment in the early years and in phonics and these are now also above the national average.

You have high aspirations for the school's future and have accurately identified its strengths and weaknesses in your self-evaluation of the school. The school improvement plan includes a clear set of actions that you will undertake to achieve your objectives. Clear deadlines are in place and success criteria are linked to the amount of progress pupils make.

The governing body is a dedicated and skilled group of individuals who know the school well. They are making a valuable contribution to its improvement.

You have a comprehensive system in place to check on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This has helped you to maintain a strong and dedicated team of teachers and teaching assistants during a recent period of staff turnover.

Pupils in the school greeted me warmly and were polite. Pupils I spoke with were

articulate and confident. They told me how proud they are to be part of the Ambergate Primary community and how they enjoy and appreciate the provision you and your staff make for them. Parents and staff are also proud of the school.

Areas for improvement, identified at the last inspection, have been tackled effectively. Teachers' assessment of their pupils' progress is accurate. They use this assessment information carefully to closely match the work they set for pupils to their needs. This is supported by the use of target cards, which promote a sense of achievement among the pupils. Engaging and challenging activities help pupils to think deeply and gain a good understanding of how they are learning. Pupils also benefit from opportunities to review their learning and to increase the amount of progress they make. However, you acknowledge that more could be done to increase pupils' participation in some activities.

You agree that the school is not yet outstanding because changes in staffing over the last two years have resulted in a period of instability in the quality of teaching at the school. You also recognise that a few variations remain in the rates of progress made by individual pupils. Furthermore, you acknowledge that leaders and governors have not fulfilled their statutory duties with regard to the publication of information on the school's website. Information for parents and other stakeholders is not as accessible as it should be.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school has a strong ethos of keeping pupils safe. Staff know each of the pupils well and, within school, safeguarding is seen as a collective responsibility.

The administration of safeguarding and safety-related matters is efficient. Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection are overseen by a governor, who is experienced and knowledgeable. The staff are kept up to date about safeguarding matters through a regular programme of training and briefings. Strong links with the local authority, social services and other agencies support pupils' safety and well-being. Referrals are made in a timely manner and concerns followed up appropriately.

The school's curriculum helps pupils to develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils told me that they feel safe and well cared for at the school. The pupils' views that they feel safe are shared by all the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection findings

- Historically, while boys have performed well compared to other boys nationally, they have not made the same progress as girls within the school. Leaders have taken action to remedy this. They track the progress of individual pupils closely and focus their attention on raising achievement where it is weakest. The school's tracking system indicates that the boys currently in the school are making similar progress to the girls, although a few gaps still remain.

- The boys I spoke with during the inspection, and observed in their lessons, demonstrated a great passion for learning. They were curious, keen to learn new things and wanted to make as much progress as they could. They told me that teachers make lessons both fun and interesting for them and that they were always challenged to do their best and to work hard. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and plan learning activities which capture their interests. Boys' workbooks I looked at during the inspection showed that their skills in mathematics and writing were being successfully developed through mastery mathematics and extended writing opportunities. Their work was neat and presented with care.
- Although standards in reading, writing and mathematics remain high in key stage 1 and key stage 2, the very small number of pupils in each cohort results in outcomes in some years being slightly lower than that of others. Work undertaken by leaders to track individual pupils enables them to identify any underperformance or lack of challenge and to provide pupils with any additional support that they may need to make good or rapid progress.
- The school's tracking system indicates that an increasing number of pupils currently in the school are making rapid progress and that the actions being taken by leaders, to date, are making a difference. Leaders acknowledge, however, that this is not yet the case for all pupils.
- Adults use questioning to good effect both to check on pupils' learning and to challenge pupils to think more deeply and increase their understanding. This helps pupils to reach higher standards in their work. However, as yet, this is not consistent in all lessons. In addition, while pupils enjoy a broad and varied curriculum, the curriculum structure does not create enough opportunities for pupils to increase their knowledge, skills and understanding through cross-curricular learning.
- Pupils' rates of absence and persistent absence are below the national average. However, this is not the case for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have taken action to reduce the number of absences of disadvantaged pupils and some individual successes have been achieved. There is still work to be done to further increase the rates of attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that all aspects of the school's website meet statutory requirements. Governors have a scheduled programme of policy reviews and adoption and this is adhered to. However, policy information, available to parents and other stakeholders through the school's website, does not reflect this process well enough. The website does not include an evaluation of the impact of the school's physical education and sport premium funding. Information about the school's curriculum is incomplete and out of date and the schools' values and ethos are hard to determine from the current format. Leaders acknowledge that there is work to be done to bring the website up to the required standard.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the curriculum review provides opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding so that pupils' outcomes are further improved and the remaining differences between different groups of pupils are eliminated
- they increase the rates of attendance of disadvantaged pupils so that they are at least in line with national figures
- the school meets the requirements on the publication of statutory information on its website.

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

Vondra Mays
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and members of the governing body. You and I made a series of visits to each of the classes. I observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school. I spoke with a group of pupils and I listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 3 reading. In addition, I considered a broad range of documents. Safeguarding practices were also reviewed. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information. I also considered the views of the 32 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View), including the 26 free-text responses as well as the school's own parental survey.