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6 February 2017

Mr James Emery
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Emery

Short inspection of Chellaston Junior 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 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. You have a very clear understanding of the strengths of your school. You work closely with the governing body, which performs its strategic role well and holds you and senior leaders firmly to account for pupils' achievement. You have attended well to the areas that inspectors asked you to improve at the last inspection.

Pupils enjoy coming to school each morning to learn, and attendance is consistently above the national average. Classrooms are positive learning environments where pupils cooperate very well and complete their work with pride. Pupils I met knew the targets that teachers give them, and explained to me how these helped them to learn. Pupils' excellent behaviour, which I noted in every class I visited, means that they pay attention to adults, follow instructions quickly, and listen respectfully to each other. Their attention does not wander, because staff teach them that it is important always to try their best. Pupils I met during the inspection told me how it is very important to work hard, and that they do not mind making occasional mistakes, because this helps them to make progress. They also told me how proud they are to attend the school, and that adults value what they say, help them and care for them. Pupils leave Chellaston Junior School well prepared for the next stage of their education as articulate, confident and respectful young people.

You work with a united team of staff who work closely together. The large proportion who responded to Ofsted's online survey gave very positive responses to

all questions. They feel that you lead and manage them well, giving them a clear idea of the school's priorities, and that you provide them with good opportunities to improve their skills. You effectively manage and appraise the performance of staff.

You and other staff have the strong support of parents. Of those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 91% believed that their child is well taught and makes good progress and would recommend your school to others.

You explained to me how, several years ago, standards in writing were not high enough and that you responded to this by making this subject a priority for improvement. This strategy was successful, and pupils' attainment in writing improved as a result. You and other senior leaders, however, did not ensure that teachers maintained a strong enough focus on sustaining high-quality teaching in all aspects of reading and mathematics, such as comprehension and mathematical reasoning. As a result, standards in these subjects fell in 2015 and 2016. In the most recent academic year, this was due to the slower progress made in these subjects by pupils of middle ability, including those disadvantaged pupils with similar ability levels. The performance of lower-attaining pupils and the most able pupils was broadly in line with other similar pupils nationally.

You responded to these areas of weakness with a comprehensive action plan to improve teaching in both reading and writing. Pupils' progress in these subjects has risen, and is now good. You also wasted no time in commissioning a review of pupil premium spending, and you have improved the effectiveness of the support you give to disadvantaged pupils because of its findings. This support is helping them to catch up quickly. During the inspection, I saw clearly that these pupils were learning new skills and developing a greater understanding. Staff had ensured that their work was matched well to their needs.

Pupils' work in reading and mathematics that I looked at during my visit confirms that pupils are making good progress in these subjects. Your tracking system shows that around eight in 10 pupils are currently on track to achieve the expected standard by the end of this school year, with a considerable proportion attaining a greater depth of understanding.

You have also conducted a close review of precisely why pupils, and particularly those of middle ability, are not yet making rapid enough progress in reading and mathematics. Your conclusions are accurate ones. These note that pupils need greater comprehension skills and more opportunities to reason mathematically. During my scrutiny of pupils' exercise books, I also noted that, at times, teachers do not move pupils on quickly enough to harder work. As a result, pupils' progress, though good, is not yet rapid.

Safeguarding is effective.

You place a high priority on protecting all pupils. You ensure that the staff understand fully their duty to report any safeguarding concerns if they believe that a pupil may be being harmed. Staff have been well trained in child protection issues, including that of extremism. You and the deputy designated safeguarding

lead have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and records are meticulous and comprehensive. You work very effectively with families and external agencies to support pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

A very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe that their child is safe at your school. These views were reflected in the views of pupils I met during my visit. They explained to me how, though bullying and name-calling are very rare, adults will quickly and effectively deal with them, if they ever happen. Pupils are taught well how to keep themselves safe from a range of risks, including how to protect themselves when using new technology.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have tackled effectively the areas identified at the last inspection. The system of pupils' targets is effective in helping them to learn. Leaders monitor the curriculum effectively for its impact on pupils' progress. The most able pupils are making good overall progress in English and mathematics.
- Teachers assess pupils upon arrival at the school, and regularly throughout the year in each year group. You ensure that these assessments are accurate and that results are tracked carefully using an electronic recording system. You, other senior leaders and class teachers use this effectively to monitor pupils' progress. Staff note any pupils who are falling behind and support them well so that they catch up quickly.
- You agree that, because of a whole-school focus on improving writing, the quality of teaching in reading and mathematics has not been as effective as it should have been recently. As a result, the progress of middle-attaining pupils in these subjects was significantly slower than the national average last year. You have, however, conducted a detailed review of precisely which skills staff need to teach these pupils, and you are ensuring that they are doing this increasingly effectively.
- Pupils' progress in reading is good and becoming faster. During my visit, I saw pupils confidently reading aloud to each other, often with feeling and expression. Their written work, however, shows that they do not consistently have enough opportunities for comprehension. As a result, their ability to infer meaning from texts, summarise clearly what an author has written or explain precisely the effect of an author's choice of language is not sufficiently secure.
- Pupils are confident when undertaking calculation of numbers and in their understanding of shape, space and measures. However, their overall progress in mathematics, though good, is not yet rapid. This is because teachers do not currently give them sufficient opportunities to practise their reasoning skills, particularly using word-based problems. This limits pupils' ability to be able to explain clearly, for example, why an answer is correct or not.
- Teachers sometimes do not move pupils on to more-challenging work quickly enough. I saw a number of examples in pupils' books that showed that, though pupils clearly understood an aspect of their work, teachers nevertheless gave them further work of a similar level of difficulty, rather than a task that extended their skills sufficiently.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers give pupils sufficient opportunities to reason mathematically, using and applying their skills to word-based problems
- teachers provide consistent and regular opportunities for comprehension to accelerate pupils' progress in reading
- teachers always move pupils on to harder work as soon as they are ready for it.

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

Yours sincerely

Roary Pownall

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met you and shared with you my key lines of enquiry. I also met with the deputy headteacher, members of the governing body and subject leaders for English and mathematics. I considered the responses of parents from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the school's most recent questionnaire to parents. I analysed results from the large number of responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff questionnaires. I visited classes and support groups in all year groups, with either yourself or the deputy headteacher. I looked at an extensive sample of pupils' work. I viewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance and its plans for further improvement, information on how the pupil premium is spent and a number of policy documents, along with records of pupils' attendance. I examined a sample of records related to safeguarding. I scrutinised the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and met with a group of them at breaktime. We visited the school's breakfast club to check that pupils were safe, happy and well looked after.