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Mr Ben Parry
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Parry

Short inspection of Lordship Farm Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 2 February 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and teachers plan carefully so that all activities contribute to the progress of pupils. In 2016, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 was above that found nationally. At key stage 1, the proportion of pupils who were working at greater depth was also above the national average.

Pupils told me how much they enjoy coming to school, and the strong relationships between staff and pupils are evident in every classroom. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is also demonstrated through high attendance figures and positive behaviour in lessons. Pupils are polite and well-mannered, and welcoming towards visitors. They speak with confidence and clarity about their learning. Parents spoken to on the day of the inspection, and the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, commented that the school is a welcoming place and that teachers are always available to talk to parents about their children.

Pupils talked enthusiastically about the different subjects they study in school and appreciate the broad and balanced curriculum that you provide for them. In Year 3, pupils were excited as they began to design their own three-dimensional models linked to their literacy work on Roald Dahl stories. Year 5 pupils concentrated hard on perfecting their pronunciation as they learned to tell the time in French. Pupils'

books also show that they learn through a wide variety of topics from the second world war to fossils. Music and sport provision also rank highly with your pupils. It is clear that the school seeks to widen the experience of its pupils and encourage them to be the best that they can be.

Since the previous inspection, you have introduced a new 'Lordship Learning Toolkit' to develop pupils' independence as learners by teaching them self-help strategies. There are lively learning walls, which pupils use to support their learning, as well as other resources they can use independently. For example, lists of writing prompts encourage them to solve problems and make decisions for themselves. Pupils' growing independence is particularly evident in Years 5 and 6 and contributes towards them being well prepared for their move to secondary school.

Your provision for the small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well tailored to meet their individual needs. Support is focused on emotional and behavioural needs as well academic progress. Because of this bespoke support, these pupils make good progress from their starting points. Teaching assistants collaborate well with class teachers to provide effective support in lessons. When working with small groups of pupils, or giving one-to-one support, teaching assistants are skilled at using questioning to check understanding and encourage pupils to work things out for themselves.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and other leaders ensure that staff are well informed, and trained about new safeguarding guidance, through regular training and updates. Staff understand their responsibilities and know what to do if they have any concerns. Pupils who spoke to me during the inspection said that they feel safe and parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are kept safe in the school. Pupils said that there is very little bullying in school but know that it will be taken seriously if they report it. They also feel that they have someone to talk to in school if they are worried or concerned about anything. The school helps children to keep themselves safe by including lessons on subjects such as e-safety and how to handle peer pressure.

Your governors actively fulfil their statutory duties to ensure that pupils are safe in school. For example, they recently checked that the filters on the pupils' access to the World Wide Web are effective. The school's safeguarding policies and procedures meet current requirements. Recording systems are fully in place for the recruitment of staff, and you and your governing body have ensured that all necessary checks are carried out on new staff.

Inspection findings

- To determine whether the school remains good, one of my main lines of enquiry was about writing. This was an area for improvement after the previous inspection. In early years, writing clearly has a much higher profile, with examples of the children's work displayed around the classroom, as well as featuring in their learning journals. Opportunities for pupils in all classes to write

at length across subjects are also well embedded into planning. Pupils are increasingly confident at editing their own work. In a Year 5 English lesson, pupils were using mini-whiteboards to help them improve the structure of their sentences before they committed them to paper.

- I also looked carefully at the attainment of your most-able pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics. Following the 2016 outcomes, you have wasted no time in raising expectations of the most able pupils' achievement in mathematics and writing, particularly at key stage 2. Pupils' books show that teachers frequently check progress during mathematics lessons so that they can quickly identify when pupils are ready to move on. In writing, you have moved on from the strategies introduced to boost opportunities for extended writing following the previous inspection in 2013. Your English leaders identified that, although this initiative had served its purpose and improved the ability of pupils to write at length, it did not prepare them effectively for writing at the higher standard in the new end of key stage 2 national tests. Your focus is now on teaching pupils how to edit and improve their work so that they can raise the standard of their writing and use their skills to best effect.
- As part of the drive to improve the quality of pupils' writing, you have challenged parents to read five classic novels to their children to expose them to as wide and as rich a vocabulary as possible. Older pupils had collected some unusual words – such as paraphernalia and luscious – in their 'vivid vocabulary' books to use in their own writing.
- In mathematics lessons, the most able pupils are moved on quickly to new challenges and they now have a clear idea of what they need to show in their work in order to reach the higher standard. Evidence in pupils' books shows that the most able pupils in Years 5 and 6 are making good progress towards attaining the higher standard in their end of key stage assessments.
- However, I did find that, currently, the same expectations of the most able pupils in English and mathematics are not replicated in other subjects such as science and history. This is partly because teachers are not required to measure progress as rigorously in these subjects and so subject leaders do not have information about how well different groups of pupils are doing. Evidence in books also shows that pupils of very different abilities are being given the same activities in subjects such as history and science. This means that the most able pupils do not find the tasks stretch and challenge them in the same way that they are challenged in English and mathematics.
- Another key area I investigated with you is how well you are meeting the needs of the disadvantaged pupils at Lordship Farm. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils remains below the national average but is slowly increasing. Fewer disadvantaged pupils reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 than other pupils nationally. Even though the progress they make is similar to other pupils at Lordship Farm, it is not rapid enough to make up for the lower starting points they have in Year 1. This means that they are not able to catch up with other pupils by the time they move on to key stage 2.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- middle leaders make sure that the curriculum in all subjects, not just English and mathematics, provides the right level of challenge for pupils, especially the most able
- support for disadvantaged pupils enables them to catch up with their peers rapidly in key stage 1 so that their overall attainment improves.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Daniel
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher and members of the governing body. I spoke with other senior leaders including your writing and maths coordinators.

I visited classes with you and your deputy headteacher where I observed pupils learning, and talked to them about their work and their school. In lessons, we looked at pupils' work in books to determine the quality of learning over time and the quality of learning across the curriculum.

I spent time speaking informally with pupils in class and at lunchtime, as well as taking into account the views of the 52 pupils who completed the online Ofsted questionnaire. I scrutinised the school's documents about safeguarding including the record of checks on the suitability of each member of staff to work with young people, the school's own evaluation of its performance, and your plans for its improvement.

I also spoke to parents at the beginning of the day and considered the 92 responses to Parent View which included 80 free text comments.