

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



16 March 2017

Mr Paul Gosling
Headteacher
Exeter Road Community Primary School
Exeter Road
Exmouth
Devon
EX8 1PU

Dear Mr Gosling

Short inspection of Exeter Road Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 January 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 leadership the school has continued to flourish. You are uncompromising in your drive to ensure that the school's vision – Every Child Can Succeed – is realised. It permeates every aspect of the work of the school. You view leadership as a shared and collaborative responsibility. You make good use of the different skills of other leaders and governors to ensure the school continues to improve. The Avocet Learning Trust, a partnership of three local primary schools, provides helpful support and constructive challenge. As a consequence of the work you undertake with these schools, you, governors and staff are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses. The expertise available across the schools is shared to provide good-quality training opportunities for staff which have improved teaching.

One of the key strengths of your school is that you have ensured it is at the heart of the community and you have embraced the involvement of volunteers to support the work of the school. Parents express their confidence in the school. 'Nothing is too much trouble' and 'they treat all children as individuals' were typical of the many positive comments made by parents during the inspection.

Pupils enjoy their time at school. Leaders and governors are resolute in their commitment to provide a curriculum that is enriched by a wide range of experiences within school, in the local community and further afield. You ensure that these

activities broaden pupils' experiences significantly, help them to develop good personal skills, and raise their aspirations for their futures. At the previous inspection, the school was asked to raise standards in mathematics and writing in key stage 2. The school's motivating curriculum has supported pupils to make better progress, and standards in these subjects by Year 6 are now typically at or above the national standards. Pupils are confident that they can learn from their mistakes; they keep trying even when they find something difficult and are proud of their achievements.

Improving outcomes for pupils in key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics is a school priority this year. To help achieve this goal you have made changes to the key stage 1 teaching team to make better use of staff expertise. A combination of investment in staff training, support from the English and mathematics leaders, and work with the trust schools has improved teaching so pupils are now making faster progress. You recognise that there is more work to do to lift the standard of pupils' reading, writing and mathematics further, including for the most able pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors ensure that a supportive, nurturing ethos is integral to the way the school works. This approach supports the strong culture of safeguarding that pervades the school. The overwhelming majority of parents are confident that the school takes good care of their children and keeps them safe. Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and the records kept are detailed and of high quality. You and your staff are very aware of the challenges faced by some families and you are vigilant in the way any issues that arise are pursued. The child and family coordinator plays a significant and successful role in liaising between school and home, including when there are concerns about a pupil's attendance. Leaders work closely with outside agencies to ensure the strong welfare and safety provision made by the school is maintained.

Pupils report that they feel very safe in school and know that there is always an adult to talk to if they have a worry or concern. They report that there is very little poor behaviour and that, typically, any disputes that do arise are sorted out quickly, often without the need for adult intervention. Pupils develop tolerant and respectful relationships with each other and adults that support their personal and academic development equally well. They are able to explain how to manage personal risk in a variety of situations including those they engage in outside school hours and when using the internet and mobile telephones.

Inspection findings

- To be sure that the school remained good, one of the key inspection lines of enquiry was to check how well children progress in the early years. Together we found convincing evidence that children get off to a good start. Pupils develop positive and productive relationships with each other and adults that contribute well to the good and sometimes rapid progress they make from their varied starting points.

- With the encouragement of leaders, early years staff have improved the way they plan and organise learning. This has ensured that activities are matched well to children's particular needs. As a result, children improve their knowledge and skills quickly in, for example, handwriting and their understanding of letter sounds. Indoor and outdoor activities provide them with many opportunities to practise these skills. Frequent checking by staff ensures that activities take account of what children already know and understand and supports them to move forward well with their learning. This successful approach has seen an increasing proportion of children leaving the early years well prepared for their work in Year 1.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2016 were well below those found nationally and no pupil reached the higher standard in any subject. We checked if pupils are making better progress this year. The actions you have taken to improve teaching in key stage 1 are working well. We evaluated pupils' work, reviewed the school's information about pupils' progress and I listened to some pupils read. This indicates clearly that, compared to previous years, more pupils are now working at the expected standard in each of the three areas. Any differences between boys and girls or between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils are reducing quickly. There is more to do, however, to ensure that even more pupils reach the expected standard, and that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, reach the higher standards.
- A further line of enquiry looked at why in 2016 there was a slight fall in writing standards by the end of Year 6. Your thorough analysis of pupils' work identified that not all pupils made sufficiently good use of punctuation to allow them to be awarded the expected or higher standard. You have taken swift action to tackle this issue. A programme of work has been implemented to ensure that through Years 5 and 6 pupils are able to master and confidently use punctuation in their writing. Information on pupils' progress in writing this year shows that most pupils in Year 6 are currently working at or above the expected level, with much improved competence in using punctuation.
- Pupils talk passionately about how the additional activities they get involved in help them with their writing. 'These activities give us something to write about' was a typical comment from pupils. Links between subjects through overarching themes help pupils to see the relevance of their learning, and this has contributed well to raising the standard of their writing. For example, while studying life in Victorian times pupils visited Morwellham Quay and studied the book 'Oliver'. These experiences helped them to understand what life was like during these times and so they were able to go on to produce good-quality pieces of writing.
- In previous years there have been some concerns about pupils' attendance. The attendance of most pupils is now good and the historic low attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities continues to be tackled rigorously. You are quick to follow up any absences and by working closely with the education welfare officer you have succeeded in reducing the persistent absence of some pupils. Current attendance figures show an improvement on last year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' outcomes in key stage 1 continue to improve in reading, writing and mathematics, including for the most able and most able disadvantaged pupils, so they achieve the highest standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Cogher
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Accompanied by you, I observed learning in the early years and Years 1, 2 and 3. With your deputy, we looked at pupils' work in books from Years 1, 2, 3 and 6, together with collections of individual pupils' writing. I listened to some Year 2 pupils read. We also considered the school's own assessment information about pupils' progress. I spoke to three governors and considered information about their work in the school. I spoke to pupils at playtime and separately to a group of Year 6 pupils. At the start of the school day I spoke to parents and took account of the 21 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The 19 questionnaires completed by staff were also considered. A range of documentary evidence was considered, which included the school's safeguarding practices and pupil attendance information, the school's development plan and self-evaluation. We discussed the school's involvement in the Avocet Learning Trust and the professional development and training opportunities provided for staff.