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20 March 2017

Pernilla Pascolutti
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Dear Ms Pascolutti

Short inspection of Overbury CofE First 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 May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You, staff and governors have created an environment in which every child feels valued. Parents are very supportive, with 100% of parents who took part in the online survey recommending the school, as they believe their children are happy and taught well. You and the governors share the same high level of commitment and drive required to bring about continued improvement. This is reflected in the confidence that staff and parents have in the school's leadership.

The children come first and are central to the school's work. You have created an inclusive community where innovation is welcomed and every small step to success is celebrated. The passion that is shared by you and all other stakeholders is clear.

Your school is a smaller-than-average first school and, consequently, you and your staff know each child individually. Likewise, the children all know each other, from the youngest to the oldest, and uphold the school's ethos of 'we look out for others'. Your school is a very caring and nurturing environment. This was reflected in a conversation I had with a pupil who commented that, 'We all look out for each other and care about each other. I feel really happy and safe here.'

Since the last inspection, you have been successful in addressing all of the areas for improvement identified. You have improved the pace of lessons and have developed

a rigorous programme of monitoring and support. This has included observations by you, other leaders and all teachers to offer support, guidance and constructive criticism. You also included this area for improvement within the performance management of staff and this has proved very effective in focusing the minds of your staff when planning and preparing for lessons. However, the level of challenge is inconsistent across year groups and this is particularly the case for the most able pupils.

You have looked closely at the quality of feedback that teachers provide to pupils in order to move their learning forward. You have provided guidance and training to all staff and it is evident that the quality of feedback has improved since the last inspection. As a result, pupils have a greater awareness of what they need to do in order to improve their work and have opportunities to address areas for development within their learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

All procedures and policies are in place to ensure that safeguarding is a strength across the school. You have provided all staff with the appropriate training and have developed a shared understanding that the safeguarding of pupils is everyone's responsibility. By building relationships with outside agencies, you have further strengthened safeguarding and provided deeper layers of support to ensure that all pupils are safe.

Your involvement of parents has given them confidence and a sense of security about the well-being of their children. This is shown by your determination to account for all children when absent, which parents appreciate, as part of your responsibility, and this contributes to their sense of trust and faith in you. Parents unanimously agree that their children are safe in your care.

Inspection findings

- The school is aware of the need to improve attendance and has rigorous procedures in place to establish the reasons for any pupil's absence. Parents are aware of the need for their children to attend regularly and the adverse effect that absence can have on their children's progress. Leaders monitor attendance carefully and are aware of the factors that influence attendance for individuals and groups of pupils. Governors regularly speak with parents about the importance of attendance. School leaders have been successful in involving outside agencies to help reduce absence levels. Due to the size of the school, a small number of pupils can adversely affect the school's published data relating to attendance. However, current absence levels are too high for girls and for pupils who receive free school meals.
- The school successfully identifies pupils who show early signs of having difficulty learning phonics. Leaders have developed several strategies to support these pupils. Current school data indicates that these approaches are having a positive impact on the percentage of pupils who successfully reach the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 1. However, the percentage of pupils who achieve

the expected standard in the phonics screening check by the end of Year 2 is too low.

- Improvements in early intervention across the school are having a positive impact on the levels of attainment in reading and writing. This is evident in pupils' work and the school's assessment information. The school has also developed robust action plans to cater for those pupils in need of additional support. This ensures that these pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have successfully introduced a new method of teaching writing, based upon a number of recognised strategies. Early indications are that this is raising standards in writing across the whole school. However, the strategies are yet to be fully embedded.
- In most year groups, the work planned for pupils, regardless of ability, is well suited to each individual. As a result, most pupils make strong progress in reading and writing. Teacher expectations have risen recently and teachers now demonstrate a clear understanding of mastery in writing. This, combined with a more consistent approach in the way that teachers give feedback to pupils, is further strengthening the progress of all pupils.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of the needs of each pupil. They plan lessons thoroughly and ensure that all pupils are engaged in their learning. The pupils have a positive attitude towards their learning and enjoy their lessons. However, the level of challenge in some lessons is variable, particularly for the most able pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- attendance levels for girls and pupils who qualify for free school meals are at least in line with national averages
- the number of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check by the end of Year 2 is at least in line with the national average
- teachers maintain high levels of challenge for all pupils, especially those who are most able, to ensure strong progress in English and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Ellis
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your senior leaders, other members of staff and governors. You and I conducted a learning walk, which involved visits to classrooms to observe the quality of teaching and learning. During this time, we took the opportunity to look at pupils' books together. I also spoke with a number of pupils about their learning and their experiences of being a pupil at your school. I looked at displays around the school and saw further examples of pupils' work. I scrutinised the single central record to check that it complies with the government's requirements. I also scrutinised current achievement information with key leaders for mathematics and English. I held discussions with you as the designated safeguarding lead, looked at behaviour logs and reviewed attendance information. I spoke with staff and looked at the staff questionnaire results. I reviewed the 14 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and spoke with a number of parents at the end of the school day.