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Tim Gurney
Executive headteacher
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Dear Mr Gurney

Short inspection of East Anstey Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 March 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 lead the school confidently in a calm and measured way. This is because you have a clear, accurate and honest understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Moreover, you have put precise and manageable plans in place to ensure that the school continues to improve.

You have successfully used your extensive experience to develop the leadership skills of others across the federation of schools that you oversee. Developing the skills of other leaders was an area for improvement that emerged from the last inspection. For example, you have successfully supported the head of teaching and learning to become established in her role. Teaching is rapidly improving as a result. At the same time, you have brought your own skills to bear in establishing a school culture in which pupils aspire to achieve highly. Furthermore, you also take pride in the school's nurturing and protective qualities. Staff work hard to embody the school's values to ensure that the pupils in your care are safe and well looked after. As a result of the work of staff to build strong relationships with pupils, their parents and the local community, pupils feel valued as individuals.

Governance has improved significantly since the last inspection. This is because governors now play a more strategic role, which has made them more effective in holding you to account. They contribute to the planning and monitoring of priorities for improvement, and cast a more critical eye over developments. Governors provide the right level of support and challenge to you. They use training, the

findings of external consultants and different sources of school performance information to ask the right questions of you. Furthermore, this information allows them to carefully weigh the answers to these questions so that they can make good decisions and take appropriate actions.

By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, they are well prepared for secondary school. This is because their start at East Anstey provides pupils with a solid foundation on which to build. They begin in pre-school and have many opportunities to mix with the older children to assist transition to the primary school. Stimulating learning environments, well-deployed resources and good-quality teaching ensure that pupils make good progress. This promising start, allied to improving teaching, enables most groups of pupils to make good progress as they move up through the school. Since the last inspection, staff monitor pupils' learning in lessons more closely. They also ask questions that deepen pupils' thinking. Consequently, by the time they leave school, pupils' achievement is generally in line with national averages across a range of subjects. In reading, in part because of strong phonics teaching lower down the school, pupils' achievement is above the national average.

At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed on the key lines of enquiry to be considered during the day. These included establishing the effectiveness of actions taken to improve achievement in mathematics at key stage 2, for different groups of pupils. We also considered the effectiveness of actions to enable middle-ability pupils to achieve to the same level as their peers at key stage 1. Furthermore, we considered to what extent absence is being reduced for different groups of pupils and whether safeguarding is effective. These lines of enquiry are considered below under 'Safeguarding' and 'Inspection findings'.

Safeguarding is effective.

Designated safeguarding leads and the wider staff know pupils and their families very well. This means that information about pupils, including concerns, can be shared easily among staff. Staff are encouraged to record any concerns they have and refer them to appropriate members of staff. They know the procedures for doing so. Referral records are well organised; the chronology of events in any given case is clear, as are the actions taken to resolve concerns. On the rare occasions that support is required from other external agencies, the timeliness and quality of support can be variable. However, safeguarding leads are persistent in ensuring that support comes from other sources if necessary.

All staff have received appropriate child protection training so that they are vigilant and alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and presentation. The checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children are complete and suitably detailed. Staff and governors involved in recruitment have received additional training to ensure that new staff joining the school are suitable.

Pupils who spoke to me reported that they felt safe in school. They mentioned that the school's gates and fencing are effective because 'the little ones can't get out'.

One pupil said, 'the teachers always look out for us'. Pupils were in agreement that there is very little bullying in the school. An older pupil initiated a discussion about what the definition of bullying is, stating that there is an element of repetition to it. Another pupil said, as part of this discussion, that there is no need to resort to the school's anti-bullying policy because bullying is so rare. It is clear from this meeting with the pupils that they care about each other; the older pupils feel responsible for the younger ones. Our meeting concluded with an older pupil saying, 'this morning I had two little ones holding my hands'.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have used performance information to build up a precise understanding of where achievement was lower than expected last year. This insight has been combined with regular and accurate monitoring of current progress. As a result, information has been used to provide specific, targeted support to pupils this year. For example, teaching assistants are being used to provide catch-up programmes to 'plug' gaps in pupils' mathematics knowledge at key stage 2.
- The relatively new head of teaching and learning has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching throughout the school, particularly at key stage 2. She has raised expectations of pupils and introduced innovative practice. The leader of teaching and learning is enthusiastic and committed in her work. She 'leads from the front' and is setting work that enables pupils of all abilities to make good progress in all their subjects, including mathematics. However, leaders acknowledge that there is still further work to do here to ensure that pupils who fall behind are quickly helped to catch up.
- Pupils' work in mathematics in Year 6 is of a high standard. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to develop different mathematics skills, such as arithmetic, problem solving and reasoning. One example problem provided to a pupil of high ability was, 'A piece of string is three quarters of a metre. I cut three fifths of a metre. How much is left?' Problems such as these are helping to deepen pupils' thinking.
- The high-quality feedback provided by the teacher points out precisely where mistakes are being made in pupils' mathematics work and how it could be improved. Furthermore, feedback is provided in an encouraging, positive way which builds pupils' confidence. Opportunities are provided to pupils to respond to what teachers have said. As a result, it becomes habitual for pupils to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of their work. The entire process takes the form of a dynamic learning conversation, particularly for the most able pupils, which increases their engagement with their learning. This, in turn, prompts them to take more pride in their work.
- Expectations of pupils in key stage 1 are now higher. This is because rearrangements to classes have meant that some pupils are now working at a higher level with older pupils. It is also because teachers and other adults are asking questions of pupils that are challenging them to think more deeply. This is evident in the lively, yet focused, bustle of the lessons in which can be heard the ever-present hum of purposeful discussion. Pupils like asking and answering

questions of adults and each other.

- Work in pupils' books at key stage 1 shows that a more rigorous approach to learning has been taken by the relatively new teacher. Learning intentions are clear and build sequentially on prior learning. There is an emphasis on good presentation, with appropriate use of space, underlined titles and cursive handwriting. This is because the teacher is collaborating well with the head of teaching and learning and improving the consistency of practice. However, you acknowledge that more consistent use of best practice is required in order to achieve the outstanding outcomes you aspire to.
- Disadvantaged pupils, many of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported to make comparable progress with their peers. This is because staff have a good understanding of these pupils' needs and take account of them. Programmes are in place to help ensure that pupils do not fall behind in their learning. Additionally, a high level of pastoral support helps pupils overcome social and emotional barriers. The work in disadvantaged pupils' books shows that they take as much pride in their work as their peers. They also make comparable progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' attendance overall for the last two years has been in line with the national average. There has been very little persistent absence over time. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is currently lower than average. In a school of this small size, it is only a few pupils who adversely affect attendance figures. In certain cases these absences are justified. Where they are not justified, staff are persistent in trying to improve attendance. They work hard to ensure that pupils and parents understand the importance of good attendance. Rewards are offered to pupils as an incentive and, when required, staff work with the education welfare officer to good effect.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- action continues to be taken to consolidate consistent high-quality teaching throughout the school
- the progress of pupils in mathematics at key stage 2 is closely monitored so that staff can swiftly intervene and help pupils who fall behind.

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

Steve Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke to you and the head of teaching and learning. I also spoke to other staff, pupils, representatives of the governing body and the school improvement adviser.

You and I made visits to lessons together with the head of teaching and learning to observe pupils' attitudes to learning. We also scrutinised the work in pupils' books.

A range of documentary evidence was considered, which included the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, current progress information and attendance information. I also considered governing body meeting minutes and other related documents. In addition I scrutinised information about the suitability of staff to work with children and other safeguarding records.

In addition, I took account of eight responses to the Parent View online survey.