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Mrs Caroline Wenham
Headteacher
Breedon on the Hill St Hardulph's Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mrs Wenham

Short inspection of Breedon on the Hill St Hardulph's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 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 March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The headteacher knows the school's strengths and has correctly identified the areas for development. The headteacher leads the school confidently and has garnered the support of her staff well. They are a highly motivated and reflective team, who continually strive to improve the school.

The school provides a happy and inclusive environment where each child is valued. Staff know the pupils well and understand their individual needs. Consequently, pupils thrive and achieve well at the school. Pupils know the school values and appreciate their purpose to help provide a positive school atmosphere. Pupils know that if they have any concerns, these will be dealt with swiftly. They have full confidence in the school's staff to support them.

Since the last inspection, leaders have made it a priority to improve pupils' achievement in writing through the introduction of a creative skills-based curriculum. Teachers plan the curriculum using a topic-based approach to maximise pupil engagement and interest. Staff organise visitors and special events to create intrigue and inspire pupils. Consequently, pupils show high engagement in their learning and achieve well. Pupils' books show that opportunities to write are extended across the curriculum, so that pupils practise their writing skills regularly.

Inspectors at the previous inspection, asked you to focus on strengthening leadership and management through building educational partnerships. You and your staff have effectively achieved this to ensure that St Hardulph's remains at the forefront of raising pupils' achievement. You and your staff work with a cluster of four local primary schools to jointly check that teachers' assessments are accurate. You also attend senior leadership support meetings. In addition, you are part of the Shepshed and Castle Donington Learning Partnership to ensure that you and your staff have access to wider training opportunities. Staff regularly attend courses provided through the Loughborough Learning Alliance. You also have a positive partnership with an outstanding local primary school that has provided ongoing support to the school.

You recognise that the performance of pupils in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 is an area for improvement. In 2016, the school was slightly below average in this measure. You have recently introduced a new phonics programme and you appreciate that there is still more to do to ensure that this programme is fully meeting the needs of the pupils. You plan to address this through further staff training and close monitoring and evaluation of the provision.

When we looked at pupils' books together, we noted that further work needs to be done to ensure that pupils apply their knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling correctly and consistently. You rightly acknowledge that the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth in their writing is not yet in line with national expectations.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and staff have excellent partnerships with parents, carers and external agencies. This has helped to ensure that pupils are supported and kept safe. Safeguarding training for staff and governors is up to date and governors make thorough checks on all safeguarding practices. Staff know precisely what to do in the event of a safeguarding concern and have all of the information and guidance they need to provide excellent support for pupils in their care.

High-quality, detailed records show that you manage concerns swiftly and understand the procedures for referring pupils where there is a concern. The school uses red and amber report forms for high-priority concerns, ensuring that these issues are dealt with quickly. You are prompt and vigilant in garnering further support by approaching the appropriate external agency. Regular meetings take place to review the needs of pupils to ensure that they continue to receive appropriate support from the school and external agencies.

Pupils feel safe at the school and are confident that their concerns are quickly dealt with by staff. They know precisely how the school keeps them safe and value the visits from the local police, fire service and road safety patrol. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that teachers deal with any friendship disagreements promptly.

Inspection findings

- The governing body is highly skilled and utilises its expertise well to diligently check on the work of the school and provide effective support. Governors understand that forthcoming changes in secondary education provision for the area require the school to be forward-thinking. They know that the school has the capacity to provide effective provision for the retention of the current Year 5, who will then become the school's Year 6 in the next academic year. The governing body is confident that this can be achieved because of the school's skill and expertise in providing an effective education for all.
- You and your team have created a range of opportunities for pupils to use and apply their writing skills across the curriculum. You recognise that not enough pupils achieved a higher standard in writing at the end of key stage 1 in 2016. You explained in detail the interventions that you have put in place so that more pupils have an opportunity to refine their writing skills to a higher standard. Year 2 pupils receive additional writing lessons and all pupils receive regular grammar, punctuation and spelling lessons. You are confident that these approaches will support pupils to make rapid progress in writing but require more time to show improvement.
- You note that the 2016 phonics screening check was a disappointing result for the school. Consequently, you and your staff have quickly implemented a new phonics scheme. You recognise that staff need further training to ensure that the teaching of phonics is consistent and accurate so that pupils are able to make rapid progress.
- You have addressed low attendance and higher than average persistent absence effectively through the support of an education welfare officer. You carefully monitor pupils' attendance and ensure that parents and carers are regularly informed about their child's attendance. You meet with families where there are concerns and put appropriate actions in place. The school is now meeting the national average for attendance.
- You and other members of staff have created a supportive and caring environment where every pupil is valued. Pupils know the school values, particularly the importance of kindness, respect and friendship. They were adamant that there is no bullying at the school, stating that 'We feel like a family because we are a small school.' Behaviour and conduct around the school are extremely positive. Staff continually praise pupils for trying their best, which leads increasingly to good learning in lessons.
- You have created a rich and vibrant curriculum that is engaging and interesting for the pupils. I observed a school assembly where the pupils were enthralled by the arrival of 'Astro Chicken', used as a stimulus for writing. This event provided an opportunity for pupils to enquire about what it was, its purpose and what it could do. On our tour of the school, we then observed pupils in lessons writing about 'Astro Chicken', using and applying their writing skills.

- You have established a thorough system for tracking pupils' progress at key points throughout the year. As a result, you are able to monitor the progress of all groups of pupils very carefully. Regular meetings enable teachers to discuss pupils' progress thoroughly to ensure that their needs are being met. Consequently, leaders and teachers have an up-to-date and accurate view of pupils' progress and are able to address their needs promptly.
- During our tour of the school, I observed a number of examples where staff were providing an exceptional level of care for pupils, including those who are more vulnerable, on account of their special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have ensured that the care and management of pupils is an integral part of the life of the school.
- In lessons that we saw together, teachers had planned activities carefully to reinforce or extend pupils' learning. For example, in a key stage 2 class, pupils were writing notes based on a visitor's talk about the importance of waste management. They were able to effectively use and apply facts learned at the workshop in their writing.
- The early years provides a nurturing environment where children have opportunities to develop a broad range of skills. The outside environment is used well and engages pupils' interests. I observed teachers and adults skilfully supporting children's language development through effective questioning skills.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers and teaching assistants ensure that the new phonics system is used consistently and address any inaccuracies in pupils' use of phonics immediately, so that the attainment of pupils in the Year 1 phonics screening check is in line with national expectations
- teachers check that pupils consistently use and apply their skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling in their written tasks
- the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth in writing by the end of key stage 1 meets national expectations.

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

Yours sincerely

Emma Nuttall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, who is responsible for safeguarding. I also met with the leader for English and special educational needs. I held meetings with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and one other governor.

I visited a series of lessons with the headteacher. I examined samples of pupils' work and talked to pupils about their work. I spoke with pupils, informally, during breaktime and lessons, and formally during an interview.

I observed pupils' behaviour around the school at the start of the day, at breaktimes and during lessons. I met with parents at the beginning of the school day and I took account of 11 responses to the Ofsted free text service and 14 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's staff survey or pupil survey. I examined a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies, the single central record, behaviour policies, the latest achievement information for the school, the school's self-evaluation summary and improvement plan, and information relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.