

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



30 March 2017

Mrs Caroline Henham
Headteacher
East Wichel Primary School & Nursery
Staldon Road
East Wichel
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN1 7AG

Dear Mrs Henham

Short inspection of East Wichel Primary School & Nursery

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 February 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have successfully steered the school through a significant increase in the number of pupils attending. Your clear, calm and determined leadership ensured that the school's values and positive atmosphere were maintained throughout this process.

Apart from three senior leaders, the entire teaching team has changed since the previous inspection. You deserve much of the credit for ensuring that the school continues to serve its community so effectively. You have successfully created a culture in which all pupils are welcomed, cared for and nurtured, both academically and in their personal development.

You rightly identify areas that need strengthening, as well as where there is strong practice, such as in early years. Many pupils join and leave the school during the school year. The inward and outward mobility of pupils is very high, especially of pupils who speak English as an additional language. However, you and your leaders know the school, your pupils and their families very well. This knowledge has helped in your successful work to support all pupils.

Your commitment to fully developing pupils so that they make a positive contribution to their community is shared by your staff team. Consequently, there is a strong team spirit within the staff body. You and your leaders have created an

environment in which pupils treasure the values of honesty, happiness and respect. Pupils are rightly proud of their contribution to the school's caring ethos.

Parents value the ethos of the school, which they describe as developing their children's love of learning and, as I was told, 'they make children realise what is going on in the world'. The school successfully encourages pupils to hold positive attitudes to life, to learning and towards other people. The school, justifiably, enjoys a very high level of confidence among the parents, who praise the dedication of the teachers and teaching assistants, for example in providing a wide range of activities for pupils, especially after-school clubs.

The pupils act as articulate and engaging 'ambassadors' for the school. They are polite and welcoming, and eager to show off work of which they are especially proud. In class, pupils are interested and motivated to learn. Their good behaviour continues around school and on the playground. The curriculum helps to develop the personal qualities that children need in order to be good citizens and gives them a sense of their own nationality and culture, while at the same time developing respect for the nationalities and cultures of others.

The areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been tackled successfully. Leaders set about improving the quality and consistency of teaching and learning across the school, and evidence shows that their work has had the desired impact of raising standards in English and mathematics. At the last inspection, the school had not yet developed the outside learning areas for the early years foundation stage. However, these have been transformed so that they are used more effectively to develop all areas of children's learning and, in particular, to extend their physical development.

Staff are appreciative of the opportunities that they have had to develop their practice. Governors reflect the ethos and values well, including the diversity represented in the school. The local authority recognises the good quality of teaching and leadership in the school. They regularly call on a number of the school's teachers to support other schools by leading training sessions and meetings.

While much has been achieved since the last inspection, there is a determination, shared by all of the staff, to press ahead and make the school the very best that it possibly can be. To this end, you make effective use of resources, including pupil premium funding, to ensure that the differences in progress between disadvantaged pupils and their peers nationally continue to narrow. You appreciate that outcomes for pupils, particularly in mathematics, are not yet as strong as they could be. Currently, not enough pupils reach the highest levels of attainment in writing and mathematics by the time they leave Year 6, although evidence shows that this is rapidly improving this year.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have made sure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality. Ensuring that pupils are safe and well cared for is central to the ethos and practice of East Wichel School. Staff and governors receive regular training to ensure that they are able to recognise signs that a child may be in danger of harm, and have a good understanding of how to act if they are worried about a pupil's well-being. Leaders are diligent in ensuring that concerns are followed up, and have established strong relationships with external agencies so that they can work together to secure the necessary help and support for pupils and their families. Thorough checks are made on staff, governors, volunteers and visitors to the school to ensure that they are suitable people to work with children.

The overwhelming majority of parents say that they feel that their children are safe and well looked after in school. One parent's comment that 'the nurture provision in particular is excellent' was typical of the views of many parents, particularly those whose children had benefited directly from the additional support on offer. The pupils themselves agree with their parents' views. Pupils also have a good understanding of things that they can do to keep themselves safe, such as when using the internet, and are confident that staff would help them if they did have a problem.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we agreed my first line of enquiry was to check how leaders were ensuring that pupils reach expected standards in mathematics, especially the middle-attaining pupils. You instigated a full review of the mathematics provision in January 2016, analysed the test results using a question-level analysis and, finally, employed a mathematics consultant to work with your mathematics subject leader. The result of all this work has been to target specific areas of mathematics so that more pupils are now reaching the standards expected of them in mathematics.
- There have been whole-school changes in planning and strategies for teaching and learning in mathematics. Teachers make better use of resources, models and images to help pupils develop their understanding. You have ensured that there is a greater emphasis on mental arithmetic and that there is extra support for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Pupils told me that they enjoy learning mathematics, that it is well taught and that they love to use the mantra 'If I know... then I know... because...'. They use these words as it helps them to explain how they reach answers in many situations, reinforcing and consolidating their understanding of mathematical concepts. Specifically, you have introduced new approaches that help pupils to adopt a more investigative approach to solving problems.
- To help raise the attainment of pupils in Years 3 and 6, you have initiated whole-class arithmetic interventions and regular homework. To encourage parental involvement in their children's learning, you have introduced mathematics workshops (begun in Year 3), which are successfully helping parents to understand what their children are learning and how they are being taught. You

will now be introducing this programme of workshops in Year 4 and Year 5.

- A second line of enquiry was to check the standards achieved in writing, particularly boys' achievement in writing. Your analysis correctly showed that too many boys did not reach the highest standards. You have encouraged boys' development and pupils in Year 1 are encouraged to initiate their own writing. This encourages boys well, for example to build models and then write about them.
- During our learning walk it was plain to see the impact of this approach. A pupil in Year 1 proudly showed me his 'Bat Cave' made out of Lego and his writing about the cave. Another group of boys and girls were very happily writing alternative versions of the 'Enormous Turnip'. The impact of this type of work is seen in books, where pupils are writing at length, using a cursive script. Pupils are very proud of their work. School tracking shows that there is a big improvement in the quality and quantity of writing for all and the differences in attainment between boys and girls are diminishing. The local authority signposts other schools to see this development in both the early years foundation stage and in key stage 1. The key stage 1 leader is also supporting other schools in the authority.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been average over the past three years. We agreed that this would be another line of enquiry. You have analysed carefully the reasons why individual disadvantaged pupils did not achieve the expected standard. You, quite rightly, regularly monitor these pupils in Year 2 to ensure that they receive additional support to improve their reading and catch up quickly.
- The school's work to improve the effectiveness of phonics teaching has been successful. Overall, current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils in Years 1 and 2, use their phonics skills well to read unfamiliar or difficult words. Pupils who had struggled with phonics are now confidently using their phonics knowledge to help them to read more fluently. Evidence in books and through hearing pupils read shows that pupils have positive attitudes towards reading and they especially enjoy reading books linked to their research topics.
- My final line of enquiry was to evaluate the impact of leaders' work to improve the attendance of pupils. During the last academic year, a significant proportion of those pupils who were entitled to free school meals, who were supported in school or who have an education, health and care plan were more frequently absent than nationally.
- You have recognised the need to support families, using a family support worker where necessary. These pupils are supported well through close liaison between your teachers, their parents and external agencies. This work in nurturing effective relationships with parents and pupils is central to your school values and has been crucial in securing improvement in attendance, especially for key groups of pupils. However, the school recognises that more needs to be done to maintain high rates of attendance for all groups.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers continue to raise standards in writing and mathematics, especially for middle-attaining and most-able pupils
- attendance rates are high for all groups of pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Terry Mortimer
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, your deputy headteacher and members of staff. The inspection also involved a meeting with the chair and the vice-chair of the governing body and two other governors, as well as a meeting with the representative from the local authority. There were 61 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and parents' views were sought when they brought their children to school. I took account of the 31 responses to the online staff questionnaire and the 90 pupils' responses to their online questionnaire. We visited all the classrooms together with your deputy headteacher to observe pupils' learning and talk to them about it. Work by pupils with a range of abilities, especially middle- and higher-ability pupils, was looked at in mathematics and English. I listened to a range of pupils reading aloud. A wide range of documentation and information relating to your self-evaluation, school improvement planning, equalities, assessment, monitoring and evaluation and safeguarding was also examined